

# Six fires set in Furnitex



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As Gord Mugford, with the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office, and Midland Deputy Fire Chief Hal Belfry, continued their investigation into the Peoples Store fire inside the store at press time yesterday, Police Chief Ernie Bates, at a press conference at the police station, said that fires were started in six separate locations in the closed Furnitex Corporation building in Midland's east end.

A fire alarm was turned in for the furniture-making business at 11:31 p.m. Tuesday, and at 1:37 a.m. Wednesday for the Peoples Store. Firemen went directly from the first fire to the second fire.

An empty one gallon plastic gasoline container was found inside Furnitex.

The sprinkler system in the building went on when the fires started and kept the damage to the building to a minimum. The ceiling was scorched in two locations.

The fire at Furnitex was set in an area where the firm's furniture was assembled and completed, an area apart from the area where the expensive lathes and other woodworking machinery is located. Furnitex employees were recently laid off.

A flammable substance was splashed on plywood pallets sitting on a cart near the centre of the assembly area, along the floor, and on

separate spots on shelves located along one long wall.

The rear door at Peoples was forced with a pry bar, as was a light rear door at Furnitex. Stairs adjacent to the rear door at Peoples led to the basement, the scene of the fire.

Penetanguishene firemen came to the assistance of the Midland firemen at 2 a.m.

The Penetanguishene department's Tele-Squirt, a hydraulically-powered hose-and-ladder assembly, was positioned above the Peoples Store roof, to pour water on the roof as needed, but was not used. The fire was confined to the chain department store's basement.

Fire damage to the Peoples Store building was minimal. Gyprock in the ceiling of the basement helped confine the fire to the basement. Last December, fire gutted the store. The store was also damaged by fire in 1959.

Mike Coates, district manager for the Midland store, one of 80 to 90 in the national chain, would not comment yesterday on a report that the contents of the basement were worth \$250,000. Preparations were underway to open the store for Christmas, for the first time since the last fire.

## Basement explained

Penetanguishene Fire Chief Ted Light, right, looks over the shoulder of Peoples Store district manager Mike Coates, middle, as Coates explains the layout of the store's basement, at approximately 3 a.m. Wednesday.

## Only the immediate problem is solved, FLAC member feels

If there is a shortfall of money for Ecole Secondaire Le Caron, it isn't very large, French Language Advisory Committee (FLAC) member Basile Dorion said yesterday.

Dorion represented the area FLAC at the meeting between the Simcoe County Board of Education (SCBE) and Minister of Education Bette Stephenson last

Tuesday. Dorion is pleased that the board's financial figures will be audited, but disappointed that the SCBE doesn't seem prepared to take moral as well as financial responsibility for the near year-old school.

The SCBE's attitude towards Le Caron has not changed, he said. The only outcome of Tuesday's meeting is

that the amount of money in the board's bank account might change.

A letter from Stephenson, read to the board trustees at their Wednesday evening meeting, confirmed the agreement reached at the Tuesday meeting.

At that meeting, the SCBE representatives and the Minister agreed to send the financial

figures from the SCBE regarding Le Caron to a provincial auditor. The auditor will decide how much of the figures are legitimate, and the province will pay that portion.

During meetings between the board's representatives and the Minister, this week and in August, the Minister was told that there is no deficit for Le Caron,

Dorion said. Dorion could not name the speaker.

Ecole Secondaire Penetanguishene Secondary School has more teachers than it needs, and Le Caron has fewer teachers than it should, Dorion said.

Dorion said he has no idea how the school board determines that Le Caron is costing more money than is due

it, in comparison to the funding formula by which each school gets a set sum of money per pupil. Requests for a budget for Le Caron has not been filled, he said. The board says it lumps all its schools together for budget purposes, Dorion says.

That an auditor is going to check the board's figures proves the figures are "fishy,"

Dorion said. That the auditing is being done by mutual consent is a joke, he added. The board had no choice.

Dorion's interpretation of Stephenson's letter, read to the board Wednesday, is that the Ministry will pay any deficit, this year. But in future years the board would be responsible for the operating costs of Le Caron.

## CITIZEN BRIEFLY

### Butler on parks and recreation

John Butler has been appointed by Tiny Township council to the township's parks and recreation board.

This past week Tiny Township Council approved accounts of \$3,256, roads; \$83,027, general accounts; \$549, water; \$515, fire; \$5,066, parks and recreation; and \$100, planning board.

### Candidates' meeting Wednesday

Residents of Penetanguishene will have an opportunity to hear the positions of, and ask

questions of, the candidates running for elected office in Penetanguishene, in the Nov. 8 election, next Wednesday.

The Rotary Club of Penetanguishene has organised a candidates meeting, to start at 7:30 p.m. at Ecole Secondaire Penetanguishene Secondary School.

### Charged over identification

John Gilbert, 21, of Main Street, Penetanguishene, has been charged with obstruction of justice by the Midland OPP. Gilbert supplied police with false identification, police say. He was arrested Sunday afternoon for two outstanding arrest warrants.

### Tourism shows increase

The past summer that is rapidly becoming just a happy memory ended with more visitors to Huronia, than in the previous summer, even though this year's summer was cooler than normal.

More tourists visited Huronia in June, July and August of this year than did in those months last year. Seventy-eight per cent of available overnight accommodation was filled this past summer, up two per cent from 1981.

### Midland star of New Faces

Midland is the community to be featured on Hamilton television station CHCH's program New Faces on Nov. 28.

The half-hour show was taped this past Sunday and featured Midland's barbershoppers, Gayle Ackroyd, Faye Parker, and David Mattar. A brief look at Midland will be part of the program.

### Genealogical Society for county

A Simcoe County branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society was formed on Oct. 5 in Barrie, the 23rd branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society.

Jack Purvis of Stroud is the new organization's chairman. The next meeting will be on Nov. 2 at the Consumers' Gas Blue Flame Room, 165 Ferris Lane, Barrie.