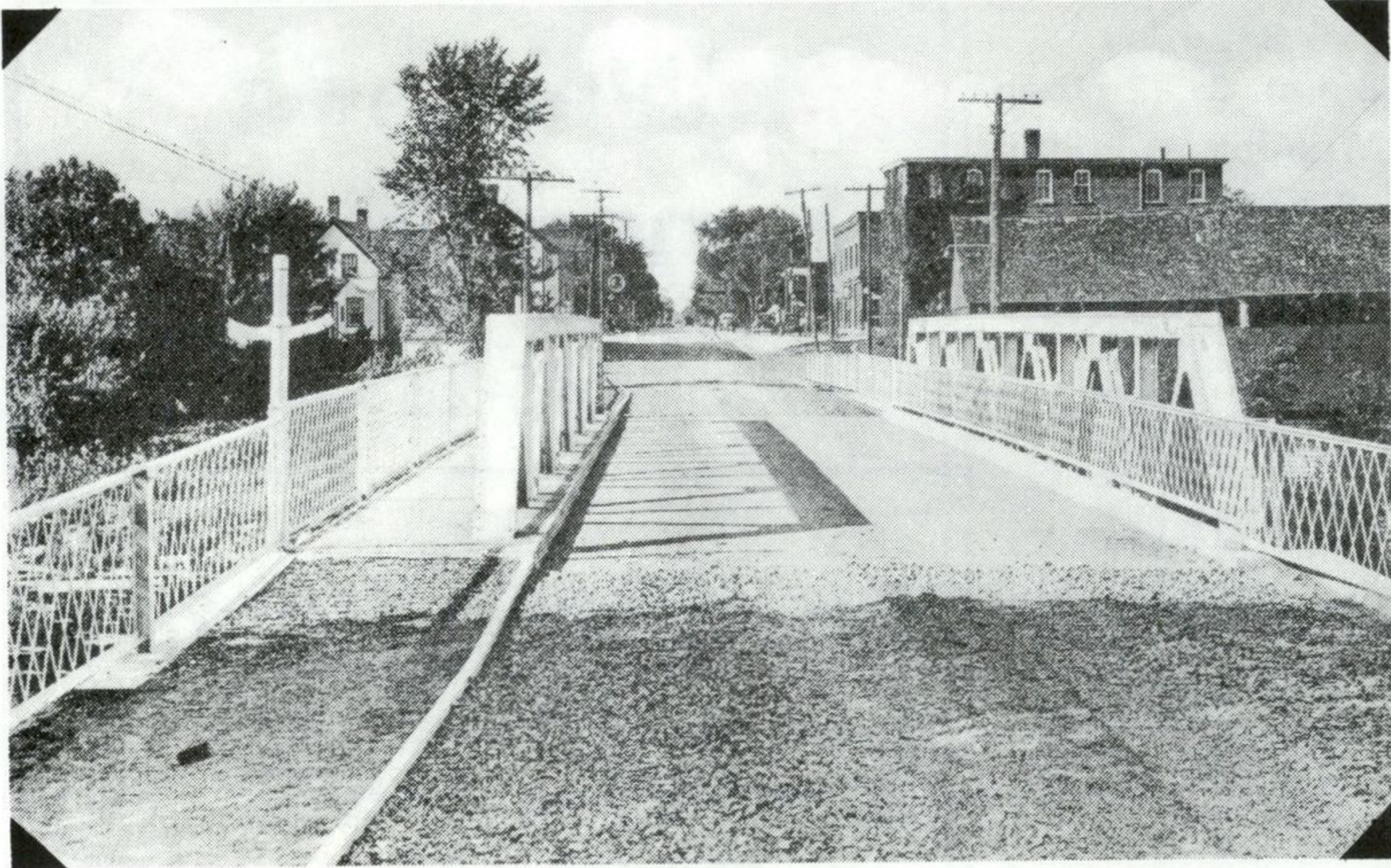
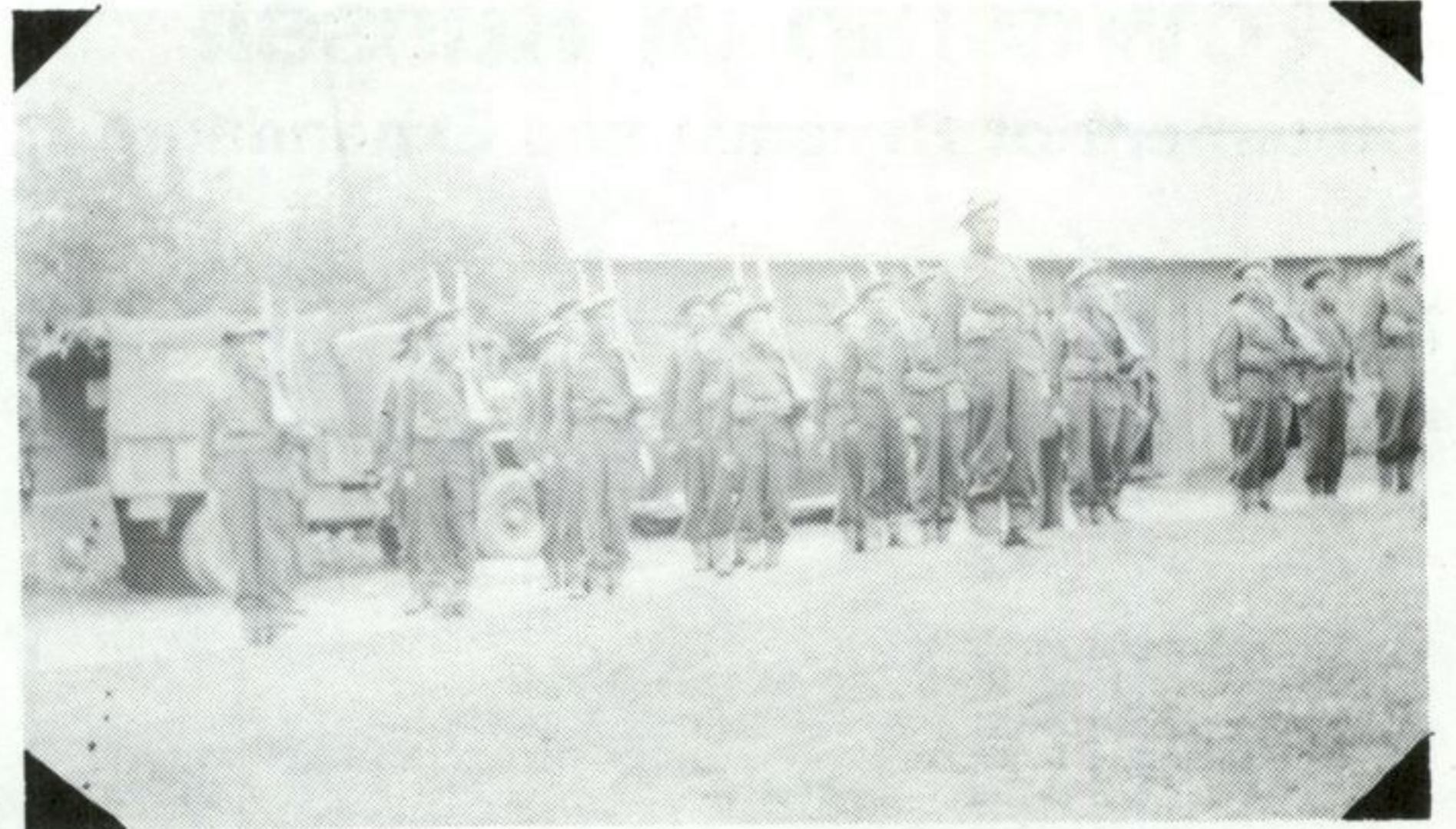


A Scrapbook of Russell



Coronation Bridge



Members of Russell Reserve Army in the 1940's



Youth and Alcohol

Albert Belanger,
M.L.A., Prescott-Russell

At the beginning of last December Attorney-General Roy McMurtry brought the issue of the minimum drinking age into the public eye by personally endorsing the raising of the drinking age to 19 or 20 and calling for overall tougher legislation for drunken driving convictions.

A few months later Mississauga North M.L.A. Terry Jones was appointed as Parliamentary Assistant with responsibility for the Youth Secretariat.

Now Terry has released a report that he has prepared on the problem of youth and alcohol use. This latest step has taken the government the farthest along the road in its search for ways of dealing with the drinking problem among young people.

The report has many solid recommendations, ones which may not seem uncontroversial, but which I feel certainly are courageous moves. For instance: raising the drinking age from 18 to 19 years.

Terry conducted a series of public forums throughout the province where he was presented with briefs from all sorts of groups and individuals. Concern was specially expressed about the effect that teen-age drinking is having on high school attendance and how it is influencing under-age children. It was impossible to know, in 1971, that the use of alcohol would increase so markedly in lower and lower school grades. It was impossible to know that there would be a considerable increase in the number of traffic accidents among young people under the influence of alcohol. And it was impossible to guess just how lax enforcement of age requirements might be.

Will raising the drinking age by one year help in solving the problem? I think so, and I do not think that we can place our trust, solely, on stricter enforcement of the present laws. It has not been working in the past few years and there is no real reason to suspect that it will in the future.

As Terry pointed out, 97 per cent of high school students are 18 and under and that extra year "would have a strong effect" on high school drinking habits.

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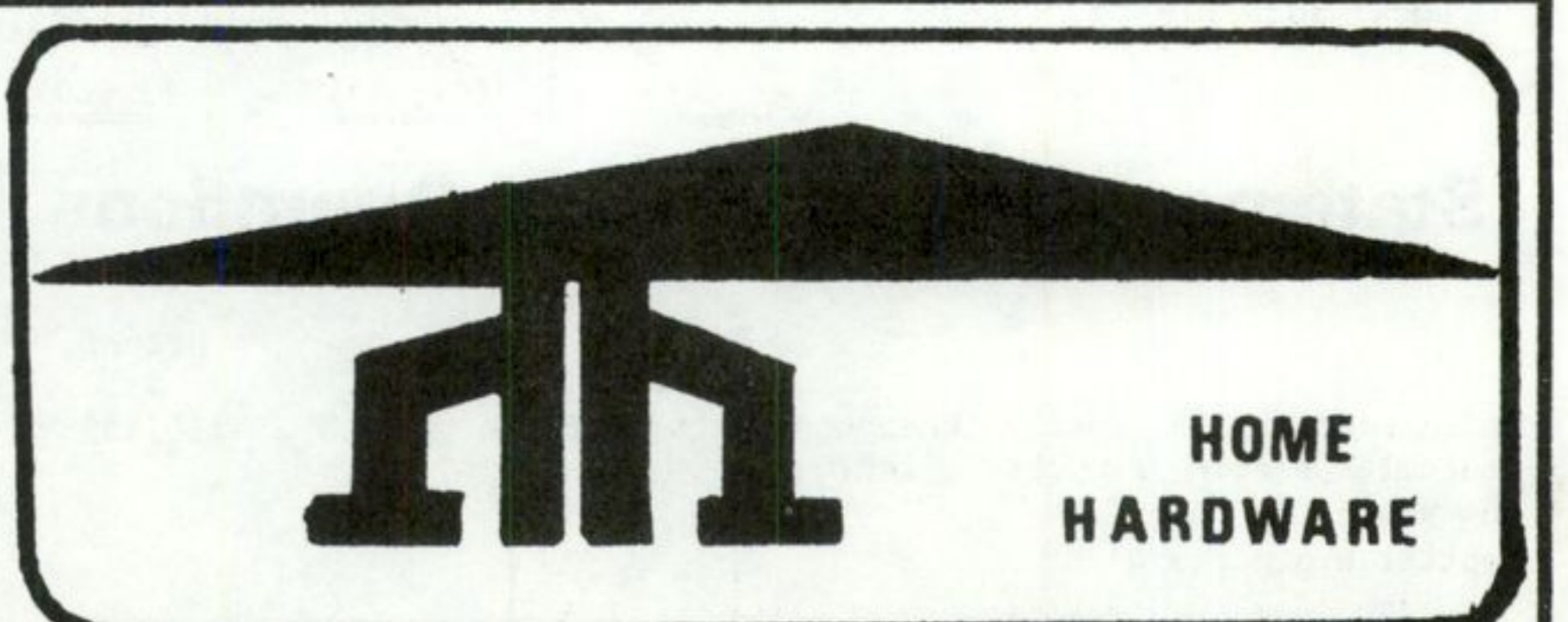
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