

**Very close indeed**

This photograph, taken just a few hours after a forest fire east of Terrace Bay had been contained, shows how close the blaze came to the backyards of homes on Cavanaugh Crescent in town before it was stopped on May 21. Thriving bushes, grass, and trees which were once in this area are now just ashes and sand, while plants just a few feet further away survived more or less unscathed.

## Fire hazard exists in burn area and province

By Conrad Felber

The Terrace Bay forest fire has now been reduced to just a few hot spots, though the potential of future flare ups still exists because of the high temperatures and low humidity in the area.

Paul Strassburger, District Manager for the Ministry of Natural Resources in Terrace Bay, said this week that five crews are still at the fire site, which covers about 250 hectares. There are also two light helicopters and support crews helping out with the mop up operations, he added.

"We also hope to do an infra-red scan down there this week," he said in an interview on Monday.

Buckets of water will be dropped by helicopter on any hot spots which the scan discovers.

Ministry personnel have already conducted a preliminary fire investigation, Strassburger noted.

He quoted a release from

Minister Vince Kerrio which noted that the investigation indicates the fire may have been caused by work being done on the Canadian Pacific Railway line near Terrace Bay.

Another possible cause was the intentional burning of railway ties which got out of control.

"There were some ties that were burned in that location an hour before the forest fire (began)," he said. The investigation will continue this week.

There will be other work done at the site as well, including the gathering of loose bush, which will be disposed of to prevent another fire from starting close to the homes at the east end of Terrace Bay, Strassburger added.

"We will be working with Kimberly-Clark on this," he explained.

The extreme fire conditions which still exist throughout Northwestern Ontario have already caused problems following the end of the Terrace Bay forest fire situation, Strassburger pointed out.

"There were two more fires in the area yesterday (May 25)," he said. One fire was at the Schreiber-Terrace Bay garbage dump while the other was at the dump at Jackfish east of Terrace Bay. Both fires were intentionally set but were quickly contained.

A ban on open fires in Northern Ontario will probably continue for the rest of this week due to the extreme fire hazard in the

province, he noted.

Serge Query, a Terrace Bay Fire Department volunteer, was just one of a number of firefighters at the scene last week.

"We had 20 volunteers from town, 20 from the (Kimberly-Clark) pulp mill and another 10 from the Schreiber department," he explained on Monday.

(For more photographs of the fire aftermath, see pages 6 and 7 in this week's issue of the News.)

## Planes ditched

Shortly before the May 21 Terrace Bay forest fire was reported, a Cessna 172 two-seater airplane missed the runway at the Terrace Bay Airport and crashed in an adjacent field. There were no serious injuries.

Full details were not available at press time, but it was learned that the aircraft was totalled in the incident, and will be sold for parts.

The airplane was scheduled to be towed away this week. Photographs will appear in next week's issue of the News.

In another report, one of five water bombers battling the forest fire the same day apparently developed some problems and was forced to beach on Lake Superior a few kilometres away from Terrace Bay. Again, no injuries were reported.

## Terrace Bay Schreiber

# News

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## Wall of flame stopped at backyards of homes

It was just after 2 p.m. on May 21 when Sandra Martinez of 24 Cavanaugh Crescent in Terrace Bay noticed a plume of smoke coming from the forest to the east of her home.

"I called somebody—I forget now if it was the police or fire department—and told them about what I saw, and they didn't know what I was talking about," she told the News.

Her report was investigated, and by 2:10 p.m. a fire was located within the forest about three kilometres east of the Terrace Heights subdivision, according to Jim Nickleson, land supervisor for the Terrace Bay District of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

High winds quickly spread the blaze, and by 2:30 p.m. the MNR crews at the scene realized the fire was a serious one.

An evacuation order for the Cavanaugh, Southridge, and East Grove Crescent area at the far east end of town went out

before 3 p.m., Nickleson said.

According to a May 22 news release from the Ministry, approximately 500 people were evacuated by the Terrace Bay Police Force from 100 homes in the subdivision during the afternoon, though some

estimates have ranged as high as 800 to 1,000 residents.

Those who were evacuated and had gone to the town Recreation Centre or elsewhere in Terrace Bay or Schreiber were allowed to return to their homes at 6:45 p.m. that night, once

the fire was believed to be under control.

MNR District Manager Paul Strassburger said an extreme fire hazard existed in the area at the time of the fire, with humidity down to 12 per cent. Those conditions are still on this week, continued on page 2

## Everyone helped out

Those who battled the May 21 forest fire to the east of Terrace Bay handled the blaze "very well," town Police Chief Russ Phillips said.

Chief Phillips was on hand from the beginning, as he was working at the time the first report of the fire came in at about 2 p.m. that afternoon.

"We brought out three from our force and we also had about 12 from the Schreiber OPP to help out," he explained.

Upon arriving at the site, Phillips realized that there

would have to be an almost immediate evacuation of some houses in that area.

Up to 1,000 people were evacuated from 100 homes on three streets at the far east end of town during the peak of the blaze.

Teresa Roberts, of 20 Cavanaugh Crescent, said she was at home that afternoon when a police officer came by and asked her to leave because of the threat from the fire.

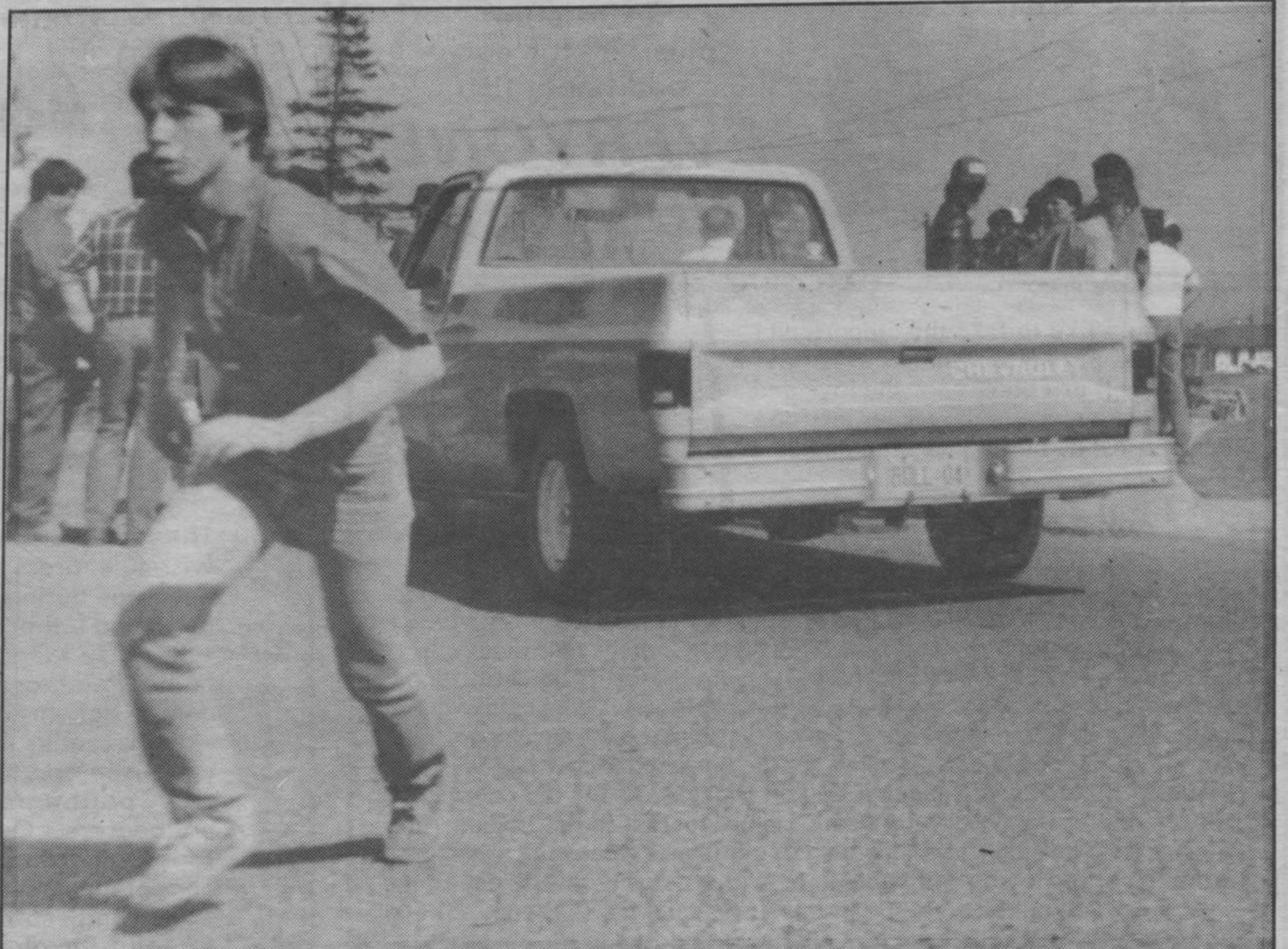
"So I left and went to my parents' house," she added. Her parents are Terrace Bay Councillor

George Ramsay and Edna Ramsay.

She noted that at the time of the evacuation the flames were not close to her home, though she could see the fire and feel the heat in the distance.

When she returned to the house at about 7 p.m. that evening, she noticed the fire had in fact reached the far end of her backyard, burning the trunk of a small tree on her property and dropping ash on the roof and porch of the building.

"We're just counting continued on page 2



**Busy day for all**

A young man on apparently urgent business rushes away from a crowd of onlookers during the height of the Terrace Bay forest fire on May 21. The fire came

close to, but did not harm any of the houses in the Terrace Heights subdivision at the eastern edge of the municipality. (Photo courtesy of D'Arby O'Shea)

## This week it's free

Due to the success of the previous mass-distribution issue of the Terrace Bay-Schreiber News, this week's issue is once again being distributed to all Post Office boxes in Terrace Bay and Schreiber as a free sample of our publication.

Staff, Terrace Bay-Schreiber News