

Firetrap School Is No More

Pupils Enter New Building

The old St. Peter's Separate School in Sandwich South Twp., condemned as a firetrap, exists no longer—at least not as a school.

This morning 70 excited children entered the doors of the new St. Peter's School on St. Alphonsus St., in Sandwich East Twp.

For the majority of the students it was their first view of a school of modern vintage and they found it difficult to hold back their excitement. A great number of the children (some accompanied by their parents) arrived a half hour before classes began. And it's just as well they did because there was considerable confusion.

In the new school each of the four ultra-modern classrooms has its own cloakroom while at the old school there was just one miserable little room, beside a semi-enclosed boiler room, for the hanging of coats and hats. And then there are the washrooms—something entirely new to the children. No longer do they have to trudge to outside toilets in near-zero temperatures.

Besides its exterior and interior beauty, the school features the latest in fire safety precautions. Both wet and dry chemical extinguishers are located in the classrooms as well as the all brick corridor. Exit doors with panic bars are clearly marked by lighted signs. Hose lines with tested water pressure are located on two enclosed racks in the corridor. The school also has automatic warning systems in the rooms as well as all closets and "hot spots."

The boiler room is enclosed and fire proofed.

This morning the parents attending the unofficial opening were as excited as the children.

Some commented about the water fountains. At the old school an outside pump drew water from a well which at one time was ruled unfit for human consumption.

Others were happy because their children would no longer be living in the danger of fire or subjected to the rats and mice which infested the old building. The teachers, although they said little, were obviously happy too.

Councillor Nibert Baillargeon, of the Sandwich East Council, heaped praise on the new school board for its speedy action and The Windsor Star which published a series of articles on firetrap schools in Essex County.

"Following the Chicago school fire about a year ago (in which many students died) it became apparent that something should be done about replacing St. Peter's School lest we should suffer the same type of ordeal.

"Countless meetings of the section were held to no avail. Some of the older farmers in the section opposed it bitterly because of the cost to build a new school. It was finally decided by the younger people in the section that we needed outside help. Many groups and committees were set up to dis-

cuss the issue, but still to no avail. Sandwich East Council became interested and in February, 1960, I suggested that the issue be turned over to The Windsor Star.

"Immediately The Star willingly did so, and a series of investigations by The Star was held throughout Essex County. As a result many provincial officials and authorities were awakened to the extent that we are now very proud of a new

four-room school," Mr. Baillargeon said.

When it became apparent that the old school had to be replaced, meetings too numerous to mention were held and as a result new school board authorities were named.

Maidstone supporters of the old St. Peter's School named its own board and decided to build a two-room school in Maidstone (which is now be-

ing used). St. Peter's trustees, headed by Mose Baillargeon, chairman, Robert Leblanc, secretary, Anthony Morand and John Shanahan, accepted a land offer from the Township of Sandwich East and built their school on St. Alphonsus St.

Today there are about 70 pupils attending the school, but the trustees expect soon to have about 100.



PLEASANT CHANGE — Drinking water was never like this at the old school. Indoor and outdoor fountains are located at the new school which is serviced by water from the Riverside-Tecumseh filtration plant. Left photo, Linda takes a drink from one of the fountains in the new school corridor. Fire

extinguishers and a high pressure line of fire hose can also be seen in the picture (something that didn't exist in the old frame structure). Right photo, Linda struggles to get a drink from the old outdoor pump at the old school. The water from this well was once ruled unfit for human consumption.

Up \$210,000 in County

Initial Road Costs Set at \$1,654,000

Initial road expenditures in Essex County and its member municipalities this year will hit a cool \$1,654,000, up \$210,000 from 1960.

These figures—approved by the Ontario Department of Highways for subsidy purposes—show that townships in the county pay a substantially higher rate for roads on an assessment basis than do towns and villages.

Final road costs for the year will, of course, be much higher. In past years a larger percentage share of these extra expenditures has been made by the townships, widening the difference between rural and urban road rates.

A survey of the county and the 22 municipalities within its framework was required to find out the amounts approved by the Ontario Department of Highways for subsidy this year in what are known as "normal by-laws."

A few years ago this information was available directly

from the department, but policy changes have been put into effect at Queen's Park. It is not considered wise there to release such statistics because of conclusions which might be drawn from possible comparisons.

The \$1,654,000 allowed is largely for maintenance, with a small portion for construction. It is expected to take care of total maintenance for the year and construction holdovers from the previous year. Requests for extra road funds are usually made to the department after the road programs have been evolved by the local municipalities. They must emphasize new construction.

All normal bylaws and further requests for expenditures to be subsidized are first dealt with by J. D. Tillock of Chatham, district

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Open Tenders On Tuesday

Tenders for construction of a new municipal building in Sandwich West Twp. will be submitted to council Tuesday night.

The township hopes to start construction on the \$190,000 structure within the next two weeks, providing the tenders are within the estimates and meet approval of the Ontario Municipal Board.

The O.M.B. has approved a debenture issue for the new building not to exceed \$100,000, and the Department of Municipal Affairs has sanctioned the project under the winter works incentive program with labor costs set at \$90,000 on which 75 percent will be paid by the government.

Despite several setbacks in receiving final approval for the construction work, township officials hope the building will be completed by the end of April.

The new structure will be located on Huron Line at Liberty St.

April 30 has been set by the Provincial and Federal Governments as the deadline for all work to be carried out under the winter works program.

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