

Miss Minnie Gow



REASON TO SMILE — On her 100th birthday Wednesday, Miss Mary C. Gow had reason to smile. She loves to talk and she had her fill as about 100 people, some from as far as Winnipeg, gathered at a party at the home of a nephew, Gordon Gow of Wallacetown. Miss Gow, who was born in Wallacetown, and has lived all her life in that area, now resides in the Bobier Convalescent Home in Dutton. (T.-J. Photo).

More than 100 guests drop in for Minnie Gow's 100th birthday

DUTTON — It was a busy day Wednesday for Miss Mary C. Gow.

"Minnie," as her friends call her, celebrated her 100th birthday, a rare milestone for anyone.

But what she enjoyed the most was having so many people around to talk to because conversation has always been one of her favorite pastimes.

A resident of the Bobier Convalescent Home in Dutton since 1967, Minnie was born in Wallacetown and lived all of her life in the area.

After opening 35 birthday cards which came in the morning's mail, she went to the home of a nephew, Gordon Gow

of Wallacetown for an open house. More than 100 guests dropped by to help her celebrate.

Another nephew, Bob Gow, came all the way from Winnipeg for the occasion.

Minnie could reminisce about the old days in Wallacetown, when "there were four taverns, one on each corner," or "when the first telephone came into the area, and the first party line when you could hear everyone that called" when nearly all the farms had rail fences, and when she drove the horse and buggy.

She was the eldest of six children of John R. Gow and Mary Jane Backus. Most of her life she did housework on the farm. She doesn't smoke, having tried it only once she admits, but "I couldn't stand it." Nor does she drink.

Minnie's brother Albert, who is 97, lives in Alberta.

Unique municipal-owned nursing home

Bobier Home plans expansion, no cost to local taxpayers

By DOUG HEROD
T-J Staff Reporter

DUTTON — When governments attempt to operate businesses, cries of inefficiency are often heard from the public.

Turn the business over to the private sector, because in trying to make a profit they are sure to be efficient, the public says.

This attitude just doesn't hold true in the Dutton-Dunwich area where the Bobier Convalescent Home, the only municipally-operated nursing home in Ontario, continues to offer quality service at no cost to the local taxpayer.

The latest chapter in the home's history was written last week when both Dutton and Dunwich councils gave their approval to a \$120,000 expansion.

BORROW HALF

The councils will borrow about half of the money needed, while the other portion will come from the home's assets, said administrator Margaret McKillop. The councils will be paid back with the "profits" the home makes over the next few years, she added.

The expansion is the first phase of three stages of improvements, planned for the home. The first phase involves a

two-storey addition to the west side of the building. The addition will contain a dining room, an activity room, and two-bed ward on the first floor, plus a sitting room, dining room and two-bed ward on the second floor.

The four beds will not add to the home's capacity, Mrs. McKillop pointed out. They will be taken from the existing home, she said, which in some areas is "quite crowded."

The second phase includes the enlarging of the kitchen, renovating the dining room, and putting in an elevator. The third phase will see the addition of 15 more beds.

PAY FOR FIRST

Mrs. McKillop offers no time frame in which the next two phases will be constructed, except that they won't be started until the first phase has been paid for.

Stressing a "pay as we go philosophy," Mrs. McKillop said "we don't want to become a burden to the municipality."

She spoke proudly of the fact that residents of the area haven't had to support the home through taxes since municipal trustees took over operation of it in 1959.

The home was originally bequeathed to the two municipali-

ties in 1950 by Edward Bobier. The terms of the bequeathment were that the home must be used for the "care, assuagement, treatment, and relief of the people of the community who are sick, ill, or in distress."

The home's operation was overseen by a board consisting of two trustees from Dunwich and one from Dutton, but the day to day administration was turned over to private operators.

PATIENTS DECREASED

However, the health insurance plan then run by the province recognized chronic care offered at hospitals, but not at convalescent homes such as Bobier. As a result, the number of patients at Bobier decreased to seven by 1959.

The board trustees took over the operation of the home that year and appointed Mrs. McKillop as their administrator. The quality of care increased steadily with a corresponding rise in the number of patients.

By 1963, the home was ready to expand and did with the opening of the McKellar wing, which added 10 beds and a service area. The expansion was made possible through the bequest of Mary McKellar.

In 1970, the west wing opened with 20 more beds and more ser-

vice areas, bringing the total number of beds to 47.

The home had operated through payments made by its patients. Those who did not have sufficient money had their rate paid by the welfare departments of the municipalities in which they formerly lived.

In 1972, the provincial ministry of health got into the act by becoming the regulatory body and also paying a portion of the per diem rate based on a patient's income.

Mrs. McKillop said there are a few advantages for a municipality running a nursing home on a non-profit basis.

One is that all the people in the home are from the Dunwich-Dutton area. Mrs. McKillops said that a bed remains empty until an area resident is ready to fill it.

Service clubs are also willing to donate their efforts to improving the home as witnessed by their purchase of the furnishings when the west wing opened.

And, of course, what normally would be geared towards profit goes towards improving service or future expansion.

The home provides another service to the area in that it employs 50 people with about \$222,000 being paid out in wages and salaries yearly.



ONE OF A KIND — Administrator Margaret McKillop stands in front of the Bobier Convalescent Home, the only municipally-owned and operated nursing home in Ontario. Mrs. McKillop has

been the administrator for the past 20 years at the home, which was recently given municipal approval for a \$120,000 expansion. (T-J Photo).



CHAMPION TUG-O'-WAR TEAM—These huskies formed a local tug-o'-war team which brought honor to themselves and this district as may be seen by the large trophy displayed. It is not known definitely what years they operated but it is believed to have been in the early 30's. Seated second from the left is a man said to have been visiting in the area at the time. On his

right is Clarence Stewart while others shown are Dr. Arthur Graham, Charles Waucaush, Sandy Clark, captain, and Ernie Hull.

*Murray Ford - a Fireman for years (40)
and Chief for twenty-one years*



TELEVISION PRESENTED—Murray Ford's long association with the local fire department was recognized last Wednesday evening in St. John's United Church classroom when fellow firemen presented a portable television. Chief Junior Hull (left) paid tribute to Murray's services over a period of 39 years, 21 of which he was chief, and Junior and Larry Hull, assistant chief, (centre) presented the TV. The presentation followed a dinner served by the Doubles Club. 1978

*M. Ford 1938-1978
40 yrs a Fireman*

*1963-1978 Mr Kahnt
15 yrs a Fireman*



MORE HONORS FOR MURRAY—A member of the local fire department for almost 40 years, Murray Ford, who retired recently, was further honored at a gathering in St. John's United Church on Monday evening. Reeve Morley Binks, left, donated a plaque from the Ontario government. Councillor Mary Moore gave Murray a handsome wrist watch and former reeve Al Kahnt, who worked with Murray on the fire department for 15 years, presented a plaque from the municipality. Previously, Murray had received the Queen's Silver Jubilee and a television from fellow firemen in recognition of his long and faithful service.

1978

"First"
Local Chamber 1949 of Commerce



FIRST LOCAL CHAMBER OFFICERS—Dutton and Dunwich Chamber of Commerce was established 30 years ago this month and shown above are the first officers in 1949: Front, Herb Campbell, treasurer; John E. Davies, second vice-president; C. K. Buckrell, president; Lloyd Corby, first vice-president; Don Hock-

in, secretary; back row, J. H. Miller, Clare Blue, R. H. McNeil, Eugene Saunders, Jack McNeil and V. S. Tripp, all directors. The Chamber will hold its annual meeting in St. John's United Church at 7 p.m. on Monday, January 15th, with the dinner being open to all interested and tickets are now available.