

Evidence of the need for the new building rested with the fact that by the fall of 1965 there was a shortage of rooms in the existing high school, which had 33 crowded rooms, and all indications were that 40 would be required by second term. So, the short-term solution to the problem was staggered hours to start the 1965-66 school year at PCI, until the new school was ready.

The staggered hours system, with the two high schools functioning as separate units, with two principals and two timetables out of the same building continued until Nov. 1, 1965, when AMHS students began classes, for the first time, in their new home at 201 River Road.

In an October interview with the *Daily Graphic*, Mr. V.E. Holmes, the principal of the new high school, expressed "his appreciation to the Portage Collegiate staff and students for sharing their accommodations with Arthur Meighen High School" during those first two months.

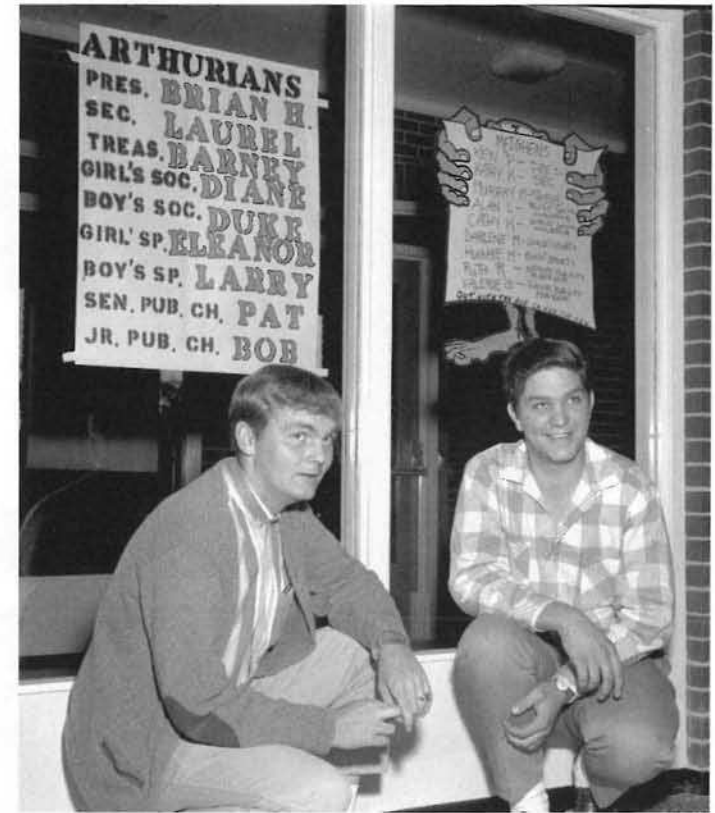
AMHS opened with a principal, 13 teachers, and 403 students. The physics and chemistry labs were not ready when the building opened, but the problem had been anticipated. Teachers had advanced lab work to cover the November-December period while they were using Portage Collegiate facilities. Also during this start-up period, the library was used as the commercial classroom. By January of the following year, most of the facility was operational. The gymnasium was not fully available until March 1966.

Arthur Meighen

Arthur Meighen was a highly respected lawyer, who practised in Portage la Prairie, and represented Portage la Prairie as its member of parliament. An editorial which appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on Aug. 6, 1960, opened with the statement: "It is doubtful if Canadian public life has produced a more brilliant and tragic figure than the Right Honourable Arthur Meighen."

In 1908, Arthur Meighen was elected as a Conservative member of parliament, and went on to serve as secretary of state for external affairs, minister of mines, minister of the interior, and in 1920, at age 46, became prime minister. Although he was prime minister twice, he served in that office for just over 17 months in total, and was later appointed to the senate. He retired from politics in 1941, after 30 years of service to the people of Canada.

Arthur Meighen was noted for his brilliant oratory, his honesty and integrity, and upon his death in 1960, was paid glowing tributes by politicians from all parties.



Student election party leaders in 1966 – Brian Handford (left) of the Arthurians and Ken Penman of the Meighens.



The school's namesake – Arthur Meighen.