

The diaries document the progress as poles were set, cross arms bolted and wires strung in all directions from Wooler. There were at least two work crews, one directed by D.S. and one by Jack, who was also looking after telephone problems. The work crews were still putting up transformers until the end of November when the work slowed down because of the season, but it did not stop.

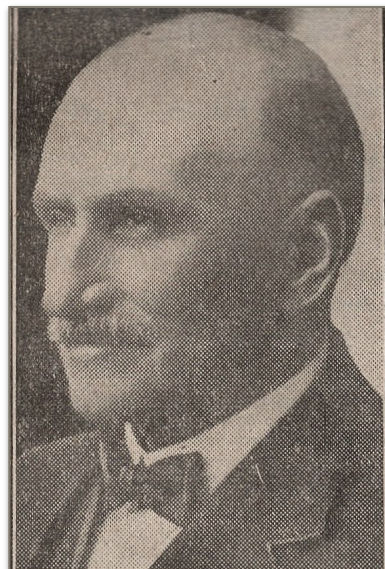
Mild weather in early January 1931 meant that hydro work continued. Gus Plumton, Jack's brother-in-law, was working regularly with him. On January 15th he and Jack went to Power Station No. 5 on the Trent and cut the power to the west in order to fix a floating wire at Stockdale, after which they closed the switches again. Gus Plumton also helped with telephone work. Jack was paid \$25.00 by Hydro in January and another \$14.20 in February. He continued to canvas for subscribers but managed to sign up only four. During February and March, as the weather permitted, Jack, Gus and two others on the crew spent their time tightening wire. As spring moved into summer the hydro work seems to have been completed. Overall Jack and D.S. and their crews had built about forty five miles of hydro lines taking them right to the doors of the subscribers. The contract with Hydro certainly helped the finances of Murray-Brighton Telephone Company in a difficult time.

In 1932 Jack and D.S. carried on with their usual winter activities in the business. However, an announcement in March with more details in April disturbed them greatly. The Ontario treasurer announced details of a new corporation tax that would provide \$2,000,000. additional revenue. Among other things was proposed a five cent tax on any long distance telephone calls over fifteen cents. Alf Hoover, Secretary of the Independent Telephone Association, said that the effect of this tax on the six hundred independent telephone systems which operated in Ontario alone could not immediately be determined. D.S. and Jack were not going to sit back and do nothing.

In May D.S. attended a meeting of the executive committee of the Independent Telephone Association at the King Edward Hotel in Toronto. Discussions lasted all day resulting in a resolution to make the minimum toll forty cents instead of fifteen. Another resolution was made appointing a group of four, including D.S., "to wait on Premier George Henry re. the jurisdiction of the Dominion Government to levy tax on telephone companies working under the laws of Ontario." The following day D.S. with the other members of his committee met the Premier who said he would give the matter his consideration. On May 17, 1932 Hon. E.B. Ryckman, Minister of National Revenue, announced changes to the original proposal: "On every long distance call originating in Canada, the telephone company shall pay a tax of six percent of the amount charged."

In early October D.S. took the train to Toronto to attend the twenty eighth annual Independent Telephone Association conference at the King Edward Hotel. Here he was elected president of the association for 1933-34. His friend John Callahan, K.C., of Toronto and formerly of Wooler, was the guest speaker followed, by D.S. who thanked everyone for their vote of confidence. He expressed his keen interest in the many activities of the association and said he would rely on the assistance of the executive "to steer with safety the ship in which we have all embarked on the sea of these troublesome times." It was pointed out that the independent companies had 200,000 telephones, 37,576 miles of pole line and 166,142 miles of wire at that time.

In October 1934 D.S. completed his year as president of the Canadian Independent Telephone Association. During that time he had worked on a committee to create better understanding of the six hundred independent telephone companies. The result of the committee's work was the publication of the Canadian Independent Telephone Journal, a monthly magazine devoted to telephone news



TELEPHONE BODY'S PRESIDENT
D. S. Austin of Wooler, Ontario, was elected president of the Independent Telephone Association at its annual convention at the King Edward hotel yesterday.