

The interesting article which follows, concerning the hardware stores of J. G. Edwards and Boxall and Matthie appeared in a recent issue of Hardware Merchandising and the writer was Leo Begley, who for many years has been associated with Trade magazines in Toronto as a publisher and writer. Leo Begley, a son of Mrs. T. J. Begley, Russell Street East and the late Mr. Begley, was born in Lindsay and received his early newspaper training on the staff of the Lindsay Daily Post.

Apart from the article as mentioned above, it is interesting to note that J. G. Edwards was not only a progressive mercantile owner and operator but active in sports.

The large Edwards' home-stead is located at the southeast corner of Russell and Mill Streets and is occupied today by a son, Geof. Edwards. Messrs. James Boxall and G. H. Matthie were active in many community organizations, especially with the Cambridge Street Methodist Church and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

The Hardware Merchandising article follows:

"For the approximate human lifetime of three score and ten years, two hardware stores have operated side by side on the main street of an Ontario town. They seem to be breaking the most elementary rules of competition but they have always been successful and according to the owners, there is every indication they will continue indefinitely as profitable enterprises.

"The town is Lindsay. Located some 80 miles northeast of Toronto. Population just over 12,000.

"The stores are J. G. Edwards Co. Ltd., and Boxall and Matthie Co. Ltd. The Edwards store has been in existence about 90 years in the same location and Boxall and Matthie, since early in the 1890's, has been a next-door neighbor.

"Lindsay's 12,000 population is served by three hardware stores, all located in the same block of the main business district. The retail business of this community has not decentralized, as it has in many towns and there are no shopping plazas. The business district is concentrated on both sides of a broad main street for four blocks. There is some spill-over of retail outlets on the side streets.

"The town is located in a lush agricultural area of the province and vies with Peterborough as a gateway to the popular Kawartha Lakes Tourist region. In recent years it

has become more industrialized and there has been substantial population growth since the end of the Second World War. Thus, Lindsay has many things going for hardware retailers who can serve urban home-owners, the farming community, industry and the tourist and cottage-owner customer. Of the so-called mass merchandisers, only the Canadian Tire Corporation has significantly moved into the retail hardware field. One other company is said to have acquired property, just west of the main business district, on which a large outlet is to be built including a substantial hardware department.

"This, then, is the atmosphere in which two hardware stores are happily operating side by side as they have for generations. The present owners, Laverne Gamble (Boxall and Matthie) and Ted Oke (J. G. Edwards) are somewhat amused when people speculate on the wisdom of this retailing togetherness. The kind of co-operative competition they practice so successfully, and so amicably, would seem to argue against the concept of 'trading area' merchandising.

"Ted Oke gives one illustration of this co-operation. He says it has often happened that a customer comes to his store for an item which he does not have. When he suggests they try next door, the reply has frequently been 'Oh, I did try there and they sent me in to see you.'

"Laverne Gamble cites other areas of co-operation. 'Very often we buy together when there are price advantages in larger orders,' he said. 'When we want six of an item and there is a better price for 12, I'll speak to Ted and together

we'll order the larger quantity.'

"Hardware Merchandising asked both dealers what, if any, were the disadvantages of operating next door to one another. In each case, after some consideration, they were unable to come up with anything of a negative nature.

"Both dealers have long histories in the hardware business. Both are long-time members of the Canadian Retail Hardware Association and Ted Oke is a past president of that group.

"Laverne Gamble started working in the store while still in school. His father, Arthur Gamble worked in Boxall and Matthie for more than 50 years.

"Edwards Hardware has been in the same location for more than 90 years. J. G. Edwards, who operated a hardware store in Bobcaygeon, bought the business well before the turn of the century from a Mr. Bertram. For some time, he operated the stores in Lindsay and Bobcaygeon until he sold the latter outlet to A. E. Botum, a name well known in the trade.

"Boxall and Matthie began in the early 1890's as a 'tin shop'. Initially, it was operated by James Boxall and, at that time, Mr. Matthie was an employee of J. G. Edwards. When he became a partner in the Boxall enterprise it was on the understanding that a full-scale hardware store would evolve from the 'tin shop'.

"In the earlier days of the century there were four hardware stores in Lindsay. The other two hardware stores 'Maclennans' and 'Cinamme' were on the opposite side of the main street and they operated side-by-side."