

"It is good to be alive 'and kicking' in this day and age when there is a great deal of hustle and bustle, when young people are free and easy and vivacious and older people seem to be living longer. If some are unable to earn a living, then the government steps in with a large hand and a generous helping". Such was the reflection of Mrs. Margaret Billings, 18 Albert Street, south, who on Saturday (27th) will observe her 90th birthday. "Young people are smart today — sometimes too smart — but they were smart when I was 'sweet sixteen'."

Mrs. Billings is as smart as the proverbial cricket and happy in the possession of all of her faculties. "I cannot say that I approve of mini skirts, especially when as young girls mother used to make our skirts and dresses and she used to try and follow the designs shown in Eaton's catalogue. We thought we were well dressed. The skirts were almost down to the boot tops and some lower. It was shameful to expose even the ankles. There were four girls in the family and two boys and mother was kept busy with needle and thread and a ball of yarn."

The Billings family lived on a small farm three miles from Gooderham, in Haliburton County and walked three miles to school in all kinds of weather. "We had the same distance to walk to church and no one grumbled," she said.

"Father was a Forest Ranger and away back in those early days there was many a bad bush fire and I remember my father climbing up to the top of lookout stations to watch for fires. When fires did break out the entire neighborhood turned out to fight the menace."

“How about politics?”

“Well, everybody seemed to be talking politics and Sam Hughes was my hero — he was a fine man and a real good looker. For a long time we had a beautiful large picture of Sam Hughes. He was dressed in a lovely scarlet red tunic and he wore his clothes well. I liked Clayt Hodgson, former MP, and was sorry to hear of his death.”

Mrs. Billings was not sure

how Gooderham got it's name but it is understood that one of the members of the Gooderham family of brewery distillers once lived at Gooderham. "The hamlet of Wilberforce near by was named after one of England's great men and I did hear that the Village of Haliburton was named after Lord Haliburton," added this fine elderly lady.

Mrs. Billings will celebrate her 90th birthday quietly and expects members of the family to drop in. "Who knows, perhaps I will dance a jig — I used to dance a lot and I might say I had no trouble having boy friends. I think the music today is shocking—that is, a lot of it. I do like listening on my radio, which is always beside me and I like Don Messer best of all. I always like music and I guess I prefer sacred music the most because I sang in the church choir for many years," added this grand old lady.