

Stiver > Ross

Ross Stiver, Accountant For Belleville Utilities for 48 Years, Retires Tuesday

The days back in 1916 when Hydro did its own house wiring and when there were less than 600 electrical customers in the entire city were recalled this week by Ross C. Stiver, accountant with the Belleville Utilities Commission, who retires March 31st after 48 years' service.

Thursday evening Mr. and Mrs. Stiver were guests of honor at a retirement banquet. Attending were Mayor John R. Ellis, Utility Commission officials, and more than 50 Utilities employees.

Half a century ago householders were just beginning to appreciate the convenience of electric stoves and other appliances, but hydro linesmen had almost to wage a small war to get wires through the maze of trees and into houses.

In fact Mr. Stiver recalls one linesman having a warrant sworn out for his arrest for "butchering" shade trees on Victoria Ave.

The linesman hid out in Frankford until the heat was off, then returned in the night to trim the trees and run his wires—before the objector was up in the morning.

ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN

Those were the old days when almost anything could happen — and usually did.

For instance during the 'flu epidemic of 1919, when hydro repairmen were sick in bed, Mr. Stiver as utilities accountant on one occasion was actually called out to give emergency service.

Today the number of hydro users in the city has increased to nearly 10,500 and the utilities' monthly tab for power has increased from \$1,200 to a whopping \$90,000.

But over the years domestic hydro rates have steadily decreased and are now being only a fraction of those 50 years ago.

To illustrate, Mr. Stiver compared his present electric bill of \$8.45 for 1,200 kw. to \$76.8 which would have been the bill at 1916 rates for the same amount of power.

Actually the Belleville Utilities Commission did not exist in 1916. The electric utility was then owned and operated by Ontario Hydro. The city purchased the distribution system in 1929 at a cost of \$181,523.

Since 1916 city overhead lines have been rebuilt three times and there are now five sub-stations and plant and equipment is valued at four and a half million dollars.

The Utilities took over the city water distribution system and gas plant operation in the late 1930's. The gas plant long ago ceased operation but last year the utilities took over billing and collection of a portion of the expense in connection with the sewage disposal plan.

AWAY ONLY 34 DAYS

Mr. Stiver's 48 years with the Utilities has been almost full time. In fact, he feels he has established some kind of a record for being "on the job" and during the entire period has been away from work only 34 days due to illness.

A former Kiwanian and past chairman of the Belleville Navy League Branch, Mr. Stiver has no particular hobby to keep him busy in retirement although he admits to "doing a bit of wood-carving".

Also in the summer months he likes to do a spot of fishing.

He has two sons, Bert a conductor on the Nickle Plate Railway in Northern U.S.A. and Edwin, a corporation assessor with the income tax branch at Belleville, and a daughter, Doreen, living at home.



The Intelligencer, March 28, 1964