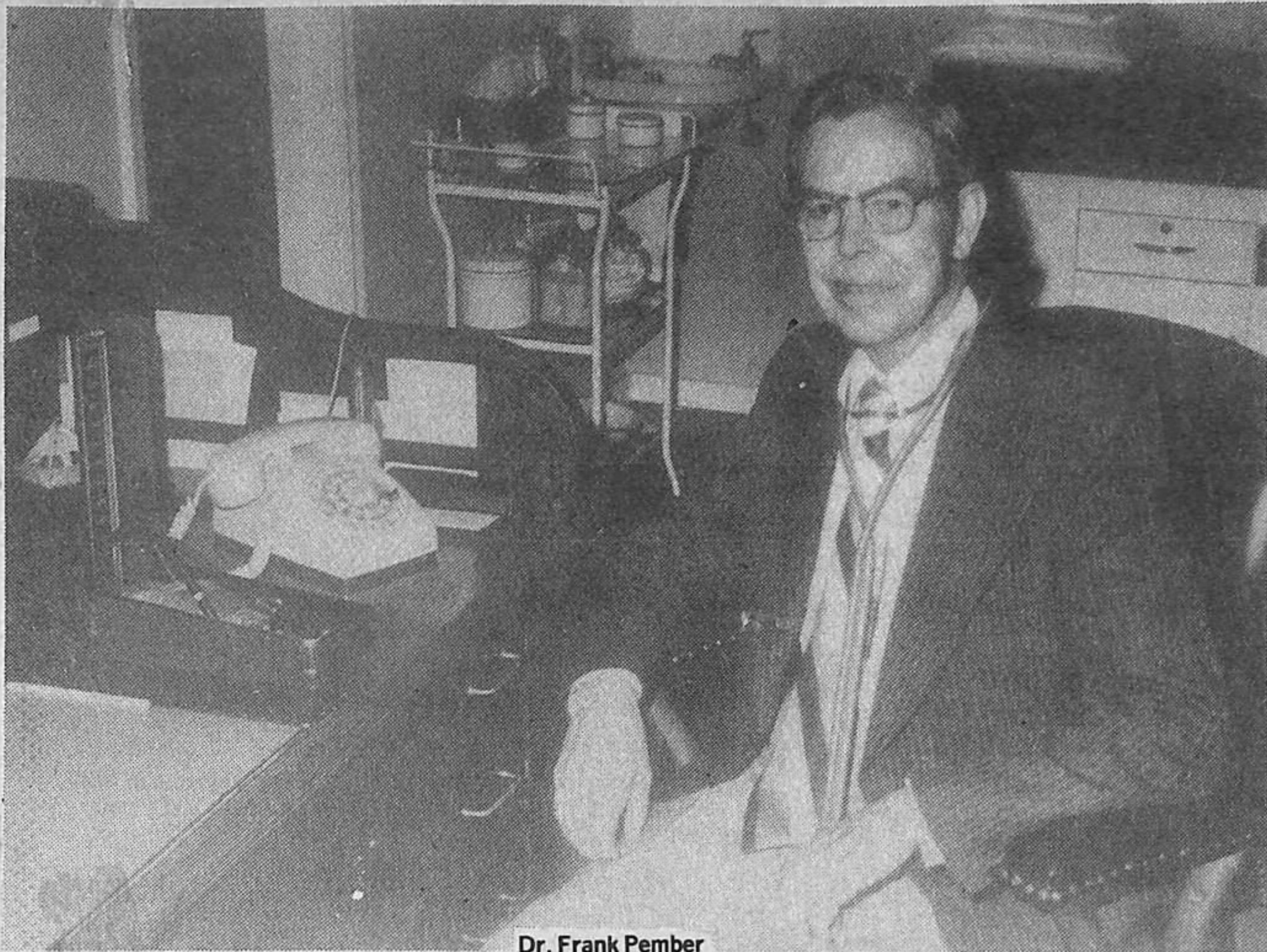


Dr. Pember with us 50 yrs.



Dr. Frank Pember

Last Sunday was a busy time for everyone. Last minute preparations were being made in readiness for children returning to school and most people were basking in the fine weather; enjoying either the tail end of their vacations or the traditional calm of the Labour Day weekend.

Sunday marked also an occasion in the history of Colborne and Cramahe. It was the 50th anniversary of the coming to town of the area's longest serving doctor, Frank Pember.

Fifty years ago in the world was also a historic occasion. Society was riding out the final months of the roaring twenties and in a short while it would be plunged into the period of the great depression.

Dr. Pember picked a good time to leave the city of Toronto and the choice of Colborne as a place to establish his practice must have suited him because, except for a period of absence during the second world war, he has been a resident of the village ever since.

Dr. Pember was born in England, but his father, a

railwayman, emigrated to this country soon thereafter. Frank was brought up for the most part in Toronto and in spite of his rather humble background he managed to work his way through university at the U of T where he received a bachelor of science degree in 1923 and later his M.D. in 1926. From there he travelled to Brooklyn, New York where he served his internship and took his training as a general practitioner and surgeon.

Dr. Pember must have had some idea that his place of work would be in the country for his decision to study surgery connected with his knowledge that such ability would be essential in a rural practice.

He returned to Toronto in 1928 and placed an ad in the Toronto Star, seeking to buy a practice. The third reply came from Colborne where Dr. Archer Brown was desiring a new location. Ten months later, the young doctor found himself in the wake of the stock market crash and its ensuing disastrous consequences which were to change life everywhere.

"Folks here just didn't have the money," he remembers.

Over the next ten years the doctor suffered with the rest of society, watching as savings diminished and wages all but disappeared. He was working six afternoons and evenings each week on his private practice. Meanwhile he had to travel each morning to serve his hours at the General Hospital in Cobourg. When he returned home to Colborne he knew it was to face seven days a week and 24 hours of each day when he was on call for emergencies.

Those were curious days for a country doctor just starting out. He was the only surgeon between Belleville and Port Hope and in the wintertime one could never count on the roads being clear since between Colborne and Toronto there were only two government snowplows.

Since almost everyone was poor during those years it was sometimes impossible for people in need to muster the two dollars which the doctor charged for house calls and he would often be paid in the

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