

Historic Day in 1953 Town Got Dial Phones

According to the 1951 census Georgetown's population had risen to 3452 inhabitants. By the end of 1951 there were 1,649 telephones for the town.

According to 1952's 'Business Year Book' Georgetown had 17 industrial plants (1949 estimate) and 901 householders.

The Georgetown 'Herald' of July 28, 1952, contained a drawing of an attractive brick building captioned 'Proposed New Telephone Building'. It announced that tenders have now been called for the erection of Georgetown's new dial telephone exchange building, an architectural sketch of which is seen here. The attractive one-story structure will be located on the old Ruston property on Main Street and will house the complicated equipment needed to bring dial service to Georgetown. Construction of the building is expected to get under way late this summer after the present building on the property has been removed. The building will be 42 feet wide and 46 feet deep, of reinforced concrete construction with brick walls and stone trim.

PREPARE FOR CUTOVER
A company-prepared announcement for inter-departmental information, dated Dec. 5, 1952, read: "Georgetown - Building ready-Feb., 1953. A supplementary directory will be required. Equipment shipment March 16. Completion scheduled for about Sept. 4, 1953. Suggested cut-over date Sept. 10. A work schedule is being lined up as in the case of Aurora, and will be issued at a local meeting."

By the close of 1952 there were 1,714 telephones in Georgetown.

A somewhat cryptic engineering memo for Georgetown, 1953 reads: "Estimate 1951 authorized installation of an unattended dial office to be known as Triangle-7 to replace existing manual office. Installation of 1900 terminals and retirement of existing 105-B switchboards."

On January 12, 1953, a meeting of "The Central Division Co-ordinating Committee" in concurrence with the District Heads and Division Construction Superintendents" was held, and at long last the "Interdepartmental Work Schedule" of this Georgetown cutover project was outlined in detail. The whole programme, consisting of 177 de-

tailed items, obviously cannot be summarized here. Each process was planned to be carried out right on the dot, so that no delay should halt the cutover on September 19th which falls on a Saturday. The Northern Electric Company, it was planned, would begin installing in the new building on March 16th, 1953, and the building itself was supposed to be available for equipment installation nearly three weeks earlier. Dial demonstrations were planned, and talks planned to be given at schools and clubs to prepare Georgetown telephone users to use the new system without difficulty. Inaugural ceremonies, as planned, should have preparations started about August 17th, 1953, in order that there be no hitch.

The Georgetown 'Herald' of February 4, 1953, carried an announcement which was doubtless read with keen interest when it appeared.

DIAL TELEPHONE SWITCH COMES IN SEPTEMBER

The various projects associated with the conversion of Georgetown's telephone system to dial operation are progressing according to plan, W. O. Misener, Bell Telephone manager for the region, said this week. The conversion is scheduled to take place in September.

The new telephone exchange building on the old Ruston property on Main Street is nearing completion, and installation of the complicated dial switching equipment and associated apparatus will get under way shortly.

Exterior of the attractive one-story has been completed, and the finishing touches are now being made to the interior. The structure is 42 feet wide and 46 feet deep, of reinforced concrete construction, with brick walls and stone trim.

In addition to the installation and testing of the dial equipment, other projects must be carried through in the months preceding the conversion. The entire wire and cable network serving the exchange area must be adapted for use under the dial system and extended into new areas. Present telephone instruments must be replaced by dial telephones.

All these projects must be co-ordinated to meet the cut-over date when all Georgetown telephones will be switched with

LAST OF SERIES

thin a matter of seconds from manual to dial operation.

Georgetown telephone numbers will be changed co-incident with the conversion, Mr. Misener said. Subscribers will be advised of their new numbers well in advance of the conversion. The new numbers will be contained in a new directory which will be issued just prior to the conversion.

According to the minutes of a special meeting of the Division Co-ordinating Committee held in Brampton on March 3, 1953, "The (Georgetown) building is now ready. It is expected the Northern Electric Company will start about mid-March and completed by the end of August. Cutover is scheduled for September 19th." The Town Council was notified about a year ago concerning the fire alarm agreement and it was again notified recently that this agreement will terminate with the cutover.

"Provision of fire extinguishers, etc., in the new building should be checked as soon as possible."

So a long chapter in Georgetown's telephone history — the opening chapter covering almost seventy momentous years — ended, and a new one, Chapter II, started on Saturday, September 19, 1953. Clicking, chattering, impersonal machinery took over handling of calls which for seven decades had been dealt with by human intermediaries — the Bell Telephone Company's Georgetown operations had said "Number please!" for the last time.

This account of the change-over appeared in 'The Herald', September 23, 1953.

GEORGETOWN GOY DIALS SUNDAY MORNING AT 6.57

"Pull coils — release switches"

These words were the signal for the important changes which took place in the Georgetown telephone exchange at 6.57 a.m. Sunday. They climaxed an extensive project which gave the town and surrounding district its new dial telephone system.

A representative group of Georgetown civic officials and business men gathered in the

new exchange building on Main Street to watch the conversion. They saw the intricate dial switching apparatus take over the job of connecting local calls within seconds after the old manual exchange was cut out of service.

Mayor Jack Armstrong and assessment commissioner Joseph Gibbons officially opened the exchange. Mayor Armstrong placed the first official long distance call through the new dial equipment when he telephoned Mayor Frank Thompson of Milton. Mr. Gibbons called Archdeacon W. G. O. Thompson in the first official local call handled by the dial apparatus.

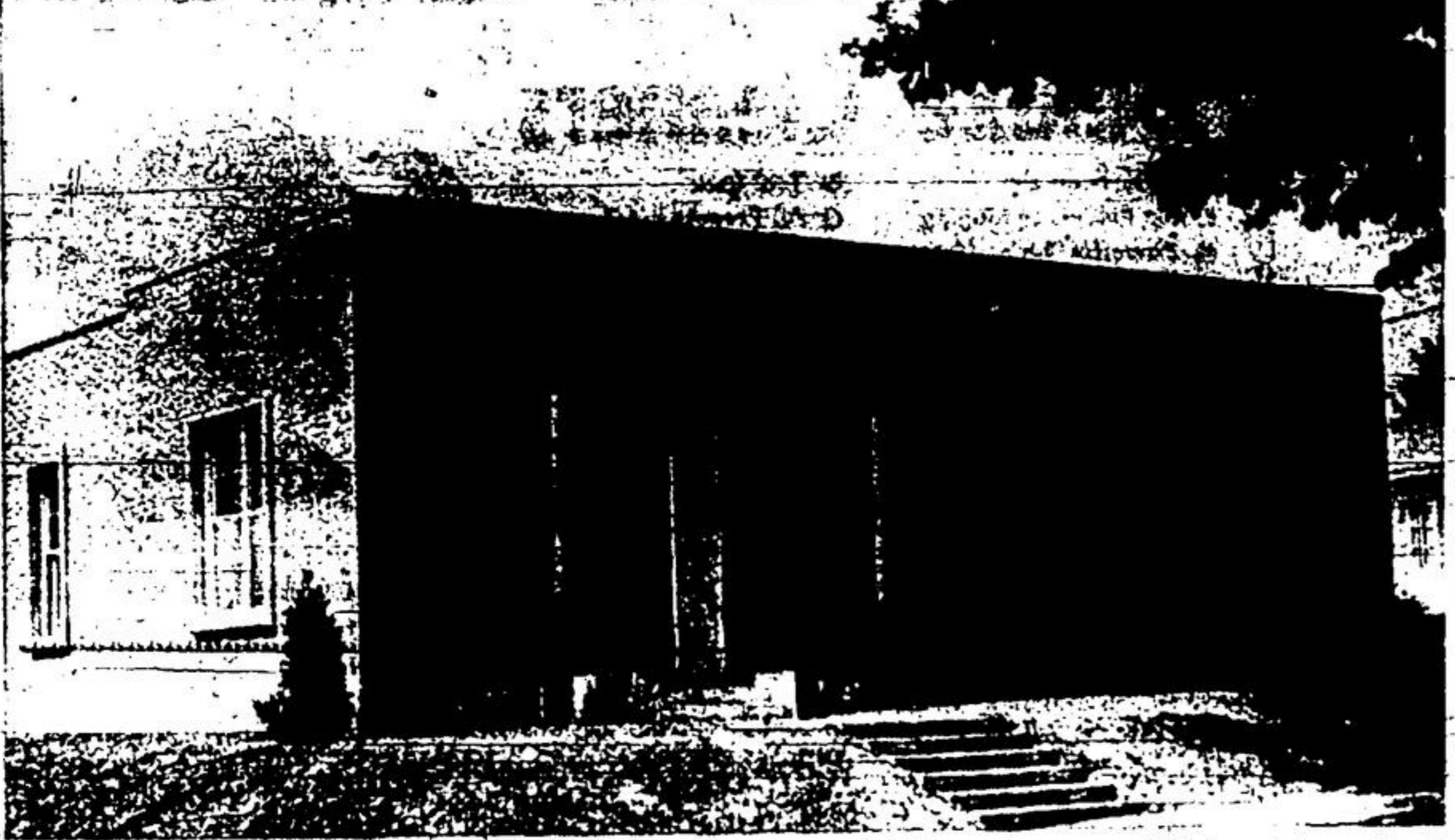
Earlier, at the signal "pull coils," a group of men wearing goggles, yanked out the hundreds of tiny fuses, known as heat coils, which connected telephone lines with the old manual exchange — and the switchboard was "dead." Seconds later, the words "release switches" was the signal for another group of men in the new office to free the dial apparatus for operation by pulling out hundreds of little insulators known as blocking picks. Immediately, the new dial switching equipment went into operation connecting calls.

Bell Telephone officials who were present included C. B. Shaver, west district manager; B. L. Sargent, district plant superintendent; H. E. Howden, district traffic superintendent; W. O. Misener, manager; H. A. Lilly, plant wire chief, and Miss Mabel Chave, chief operator.

The Bell Company entertained at breakfast afterwards at the McGibbon House, their guests including the clerk and members of council, Chamber of Commerce president Fred Chapman, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Harber and the Herald editor.

COULD BE TRAGIC

It is possible for a baby to drown in his own crib while he is taking his meal from a feeding bottle. It sounds impossible but if the feeding bottle is propped up on some gadget and the baby is too small to turn his head away the liquid could fill his mouth and lungs and drown the child. A baby should always be held while he is feeding for the emotional effect as well as safety.



DIAL SWITCHING EQUIPMENT was installed in the Bell Company's new building at the corner of Main and James Streets.

9 Demerits, Then New Tests, Road Safety Workshop Learns

Commissioner Eric Silk of the Ontario Provincial Police, said he does not believe raising the speed limit on these highways would result in increased numbers of accidents. He called for a realistic approach.

PUBLIC APATHY

The commissioner added that public apathy to traffic safety must be dissipated before substantial progress in this field is possible. It has nothing to do with the numbers of police available on the highways, he said.

Traffic safety principles could be taught in the schools more intensively, long before the youngster reaches the age where he may apply for a driving licence, Commissioner Silk said.

James Mackie, Metro Toronto Chief of Police, urged legislation making registered owners of vehicles responsible for traffic violations whether they were

behind the wheel at the time or not.

"In today's traffic it is impossible for a police officer on a motorcycle or in a police car to chase an offender without endangering the lives of others on the road," he said. And a policeman on foot in Metro Toronto is virtually useless for enforcing traffic regulations, the chief added.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Keith Wallace, a driver instruction teacher at Thomas A. Blacklock High School in Oakville, suggested a major solution to the traffic toll among young people is high school driver instruction. About 800 high schools in Ontario offer such courses.

"The courses are very popular with parents," he said. "Most of them do not want to teach

their sons and daughters to their own bad habits," he concluded for fear of passing oncluded.

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