## Custom first began in Great Britain

"The stockings were hung by the chimney with care. "In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there."

So wrote Clement E. Moore in 1822. And so it will be in most homes this Christmas Eve, at least where there are small children, at least in North America, and even though St. Nicholas has become Santa Claus.

The custom seems to come from Great Britain. There, too, children hang their stockings by the fireplace, hoping that Father Christmas will fill them with Christmas treats. In other lands the customs vary.

Early Christmas

In Belgium and The Netherlands, people exchange gifts on Dec. 6, St. Nicholas' Day. A man dressed in the rich robes of a bishop represents the saint, World Book Encyclopedia says. He questions the children about their behavior during the year and promises to return during the night with gifts for the good children.

In Holland the children fill wooden shoes with cookies and candles for the saint and leave them on the doorstep. He takes the goodles and leaves toys and other gifts. In France, children put their shoes on the doorstep on Christmas Eve so the Christ Child (or Father Christmas) can fill them with gifts. In Italy, on the eve of Epiphany, or Twelfth Night, a sort of aged fairy queen named La Befana comes down the chimney with gifts for the children.

Different versions

Most children in South America believe that the Wise Men bring them Christmas gifts. Children in Brazil find gifts in their shoes on Christmas morning. On the eve of Epiphany some people leave water and hay on the doorstep for the Wise Men's camels.

Christians in China and Japan observe Christmas customs that are familiar to us. The Chinese version of Santa Claus has a Chinese name which varies according to the dialect.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

TO ALL OUR

FRIENDS and NEIGHBOURS

KAKKAKKAKKKKKKKKKKKK

### And in Japan? Santa Claus is called Santa Claus.

Mistletoe magic

Ancient followers of the Druid there was a ceremonial rite in SANTA CLAUS had a huge fluffy bear in his religion were the first to regard which Druid priests, using a bag of goodles for the holder of the lucky Tyler Jr. and wife Dolores helped Santa mistletoe as a sacred plant, say golden sickle, cut the mistletoe the editors of The New Book of Knowledge. They supposed it to and distributed them among the have Panacean virtues in warding off everything from

witches to disease. Each year, about the time mistletoe. To them, mistletoe

leaves from the "sacred oak"

The Saxons also valued this plant; they were the first to call it Christmas is celebrated today, symbolized everlasting peace.

EDWIN & BELLA PERRYMAN

9t's the

We send

happy time!

our wishes

for a merry

season of

gatherings with families

and friends. And it's the

for letting us serve you.

been ours. We look forward to

more Christmases with you.

from all the Staff at

JOHN BOUGHTON JEWELLERS

A MAIN OF A CONTRACTOR OF THE ACTION

time to say thanks

The pleasure has

'A tragedy we cannot face"

# Fire Bureau urges safe yule

ticket at Tyler Transport's annual Christ- make the draw. -(Staff Photo.)

Christmas is the easiest time of year to have a fire in your home, according to Acton Fire Chief M. Holmes, 1970 chairman of Halton County Fire Prevention Bureau.

"It's just unfortunate that such a happy time of year can be quickly marred by a fire tragedy," says Chief Holmes. But the happy sounds of jingle bells, children's laughter and seasonal hymns are easily drowned out by the wail of a fire siren.

Work year round

"Our Christmas fire safety campaign is probably the most important battle we wage in the course of a year's work," says the chairman of the county-wide Bureau, "Our year-round campaigns cover spring grass fires, Hallowe'en hazards, fire prevention week and a hundred and one other things related to fire, but Christmas has to rank as number one. Fire is grim at any time of the year, yet at Christmas time fire is a tragedy we just cannot face."

Bureau's annual Christmas campaign is launched early each December when fire departments around Halton distribute free Christmas tree tags to tree dealers and service club outlets in the county. These tags are stapled to a branch of the tree and carry a six-point message of safety into practically every home in Halton:

Do's and don'ts

"Don't put the tree up until a week before Christmas; Don't place it near any exit or heating appliance: Don't place the tree in a dry container; Don't use other than approved decorations; Don't leave tree lights on when retiring or going out; Don't use other than 15 amp. fuses in lighting circuits." Why stress fire safety with

Christmas trees? Chief Holmes says evergreen trees are dangerous it owners don't take precautions to keep them dry, as a dry tree can be reduced to ashes in 18 seconds.

The newer metal or plastic

synthetic trees can also be a

hazard if they are not properly wired for lighting. And any tree is a hazard if combined with careless smokers, frayed electrical wiring or a pile of discarded gift wrappings.

Safety wish The Bureau also distributes a large, colorful Christmas poster to churches, offices and public buildings each Christmas. It features a large holly wreath and the message, "Wishing you a

Authorization of payment of

accounts took up a good portion of

the business at the last meeting of

A WALKING doll was just

what young Deborah Main

wanted for Christmas. De-

borah was one of many

-(Staff Photo.)

Esquesing council okays payment

Esquesing council for 1970. Ac-

counts approved for payment

FIRE-SAFE Christmas."

Member fire departments in

Acton, Georgetown, Milton, Oak-

ville and Burlington also back the

Bureau's Christmas fire safety

campaign with local programs

designed to ensure a fire-free yule season. Their programs include advertising on radio and in newspapers and often floats or

fire pumpers bearing safety

messages in the local Santa Claus

mas party at the Acton Music Centre. Ted

included: -\$1,585 legal fees to the firm of Helson, Baines and Langdon, township solicitors.

-\$110 to reeve George Currie for attending meetings of the Halton County Industrial Committee, during 1970.

-\$30 each to deputy-reeve Torn

### Reminders of old days

E. E. Perryman, whose 50th wedding anniversary was celebrated recently, enjoys keeping reminders of the old days. He brought to the Free Press this week his father's old cash book, recording his salary with W. H. Storey and Son, dated. 1895. On week's salary was indicated as \$10.50, or five days' salary at \$8.75.

He also has his parents' wedding certificate for Thomas Perryman and Fanny Christie, dated June, 1879 in the village of Acton, with witnesses W. H. Storey and Agnes Perryman.

Hill and councillor Ken Marshall and \$40 to former clerk K. C. Lindsay for service on Acton fire area committee.

-\$50 each to councillors Wilfrid Leslie and Russell Miller for service on Georgetown fire area committee.

-\$438 to George Herrington for dog catching services during the months of October and November.

-\$95.04 to clerk-treasurer Delmar French for mileage

during 1970. -The township's municipal levy from the Halton County Board of Education in the amount

-\$5,340.75 to Georgetown Fire Area for fire protection.

of \$133,206.

-\$1,811.70 to Milton Fire Area for fire protection.

-Reeve George Currie's 1970 salary in the amount of \$1,700. Council also authorized Mr. French to pay road accounts as submitted superintendent C. E. "Bud" Snow on December 31, 1970.

## Urge introduction interim tax billing in Esquesing

in the neighborhood of \$65,000

from the Department of High- new year.

A letter from the Department of Municipal Affairs, read at last week's regular meeting of Esquesing council, urged council to take steps to reduce the township's tax arrears figure to a more reasonable level.

The letter claimed the tax arrears situation in Esquesing has remained static for the past eight years.

Introduction of an interim tax billing system, advancement of due dates for tax payments and imposition of a penalty of one per cent per month for late payment, assuming final date for payments is before September 15, are three recommendations contained in the letter.

\$80,000 outstanding

Councillor Ken Marshall estimated the amount of taxes outstanding at the present time at about \$80,000. Council is presently considering introduction of the interim tax billing system.

Sitting as a court of revision earlier in the morning, council passed a motion that unpaid taxes in the amount of \$255.13 be written off. Reasons for writing them off varied from minor office errors to lack of assets for

Borrow \$77,700

Council later authorized the borrowing of \$77,700 from the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Georgetown, to meet expenditures until all 1970 taxes have been collected. A total of \$728,000 had already been borrowed, last January.

Explaining the neccesity of the loan, clerk-treasurer Delmar French pointed out payments of \$109,000 to the county and \$5,000 to the town of Georgetown for fire protection must still be met.

### 思深思思思思思思思思思

In ancient Germany, the Yule was known as the "Christbrand." One belief held that if the charred log was placed in a cornbin, it would act as a charm to ward off mice.

If the weather turned stormy, the Christbrand was quickly brought back to the fire. While it burned, superstition said, the house was safe from lightning.

Council are still awaiting a grant ways, but Mr. French said the

grant may not arrive until the

A BIG present for a little girl! That's what Santa Claus had for petite Machell Woodman at Building Products employees' annual Christmas party. —(Staff Photo.)



THE BANK OF MONTREAL

## O, Holy Night

Each year at Christmas, the sacred story lives anew. As we reflect upon that holy time, of a Child born in Bethlehem, may we find inspiration in His life, to guide us on our way. Sincere greetings to all.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

OF THE TOWN OF ACTON

youngsters who received gifts at Building Products employees' Christmas party. FLOWERS the Perfect Holiday Centerpiece CHOOSE FROM OUR SELECTION Poinsettia Cyclamen \*Chrysanthemums Tropical Plants \*Cactus Gardens zalea MANY OTHER VARIETIES

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A Christmas Prayer May the beautiful meaning of Christmas ... living through the ages to inspire men everywhere...continue to live in your own heart and mind. And may your Christmas be filled with loy.

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