

## LIMEHOUSE REACTS TO POSTAL CHANGES

# End of postmaster not accepted well

By DAVE ROWNEY

The end of a postmaster in Limehouse was not accepted well by Limehouse residents March 8.

Canada Post Corporation officials met with members of the community to explain why changes were being made in rural areas.

But for many, the reasons for the change fell on deaf ears. Residents on the whole want the postal system to remain the same.

Others were adamant pressing for information on how the new contract and commission for mail would be profitable for the "contract operators."

A retail postal outlet will be offered to an interested businessman in Limehouse to replace the services of postmistress Shirley Yates who retires May 2.

Why can't the post office in Limehouse remain as it has? asked one resident. It's part of the Canada Post Corporation's plan to be financially self-sufficient, said community relations manager Connie Read.

Canada Post is looking at new ways of mechanization and it is not

servicing new residential areas with home delivery. The Corporation is replacing rural post offices with contract outlets, she said.

A retail operator will have a business advantage by taking over postal duties on a contract basis, said Ann Reimann, rural services officer.

One man persisted about knowing what the new retail operator would be paid. "What percentage of money will they (Canada Post) save? We supply the product. We have a right to know."

"We're not at liberty to talk about it," was the reply.

Said one resident: "You're trying to offer us this thing as an auction: the most amount of hours for the least amount of money."

Another asked if it was fair to cut wages for the same amount of postal service from the operator. Canada Post officials said details of the contract and commission payments were privileged information.

If there was no agreement reached about a Limehouse outlet, the mail would have to be sorted in Acton, but the delivery for the rural

routes would remain the same, said Ms. Read.

One lady complained that in the old days the post office was the main part of Limehouse but now it would be part of a business.

The money question was repeatedly asked by some in the audience. "Why can't you tell us. What's the difference, we're playing your wages," a man said.

In response to another question, postal officials said the retail operator can make the contract system financially viable. The mail helps to bring customers into the store, said Ms. Reimann.

Currently there are three rural outlets in the York Division, representing greater metropolitan Toronto that have contract operators, said Ms. Read. They are Neatleton, Rome and Ashburn.

With superboxes as an alternative if no one accepts the business proposal from Canada Post, residents expressed their dismay at that option. One lady asked postal officials to watch Channel 9 news tonight about superboxes and handicapped access in the snow.

Ms. Read said Canada Post has people who are paid to clear snow and ice from around the boxes.

There will be a 90-day consultation period from May 3 before the post office implements any new program, said Ms. Read. Residents will have a place to pick up their mail, and even if a decision isn't reached, residents won't automatically have to go to superboxes, said Ms. Read.

The postal officials seem to agree that if superboxes didn't work out, it might be possible to go back to a contract situation.

One lady received a standing ovation when she said, "I think the community feel they want things to stay the same."

Another in the crowd was more antagonistic: "For 130 years you've been discriminating against us."

Said one angry man: "The way I look at it, you come in, discourage the people and then bring in the superboxes."

Another woman added: "I still feel the people want the person to get a fair deal and shouldn't have to take much of a cut."

Canada Post calls the Limehouse situation a "natural opportunity" to make changes because the postmistress is retiring.

Their policy is to consult with local residents and make no changes in the postal system until they've talked to the community. In 1970 there were 70 rural outlets changed over to contract operator outlets.

postal operator on a commission basis. If a business does not accept the Canada Post offer, the village may have to use superboxes to receive mail. (Herald photo)



WAITING FOR ANSWERS. Limehouse residents turned out in large numbers to hear Canada Post officials tell them about the new postal system in their community. A contract will be offered to a

## Postmistress ends career bringing news to Limehouse

By CHERYL MOODER

Sunlight streamed through the orange striped curtains flooding the back room of Yates General Store.

In the coziness of the tiny post office, postmistress Shirley Yates sorts the morning mail.

After five years of bringing news from afar to 278 Limehouse families, Mrs. Yates will retire May 2.

Mrs. Yates spends an hour and a half each morning after the mail arrives from Acton around 9:30 a.m., sorting letters into named pigeon

holes and redirecting mail. At her big wooden desk she does her monthly statements and bookwork.

The rural post office offers the village a variety of services which include mail delivery for rural routes and general deliveries, money orders, registered mail, selling stamps and special deliveries.

"You get to know your customers," Mrs. Yates said. Quite often customers would stop off to get a few things from the solitary store in Limehouse, a stamp or two or stop

for a chat. "In a big main post office you go in, get your stamp and that is it," Mrs. Yates said.

The postmistress found her customers friendly and has gotten along with everyone.

When her sister passed away, Mrs. Yates' customers were very good to her. "People are very willing to help you out in a jam," she said.

Mrs. Yates also liked the idea of having her home attached to the store.

"You do not have to fight all that snow in the winter and the traffic," she said.

Moving to the quiet village of Limehouse from her home in Etobicoke Nov. 15, 1983 was not that much of a culture shock. Mrs. Yates and her husband lived on a dead end street which was quiet. It was almost like living out in the country, she said.

Mrs. Yates decided to retire from her job as postmistress for health reasons, she said.

After she has settled in her new home and undergoes a back operation, Mrs. Yates said she may go back to work.

For now, her plans are pretty much up in the air.

Her retirement may see an end to the existence of a post office in Limehouse.

"Hopefully the post office will remain," Mrs. Yates said. There has been a rural post office in the village for 131 years.

It is convenient for the customers, Mrs. Yates said. "It will be a shame to have it close after all these years."



This is an old picture of the Limehouse General Store before cars were the most popular method of travel in the community. The building beside the store was the old

hotel which was the first post office in the village 131 years ago. Shirley Yates becomes the last of a long line of postmasters who have served Limehouse.

## 1857 first post office opens

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following was compiled by Glenda Benton from the Limehouse Women's Institute Tweedsmuir History Book.

The post office department opened the first post office in Limehouse in 1857 when the village name was changed from Fountain Green to Limehouse.

The first postmaster was John Newton. The first post office was housed in the hotel immediately to the west of the present general store and post office. The hotel has now been remodelled for apartment dwelling.

In 1877 the post office moved to its present location where it has been in operation except for a short while in

1968 when it was moved to Nobles garage. The present building housing the store and post office was built in 1889 after a fire destroyed the original in 1888. Duncan McDermid built the new building. From 1904-08 Mr. Croft served as postmaster followed by Mr. Polkinhorne (1908-19). Mr. R.W. Johnson was the next postmaster who continued the tradition until 1955.

At this time, Arthur Benton moved his store from down the street to the present site and his father, Frank Benton was appointed postmaster. After his death in 1943, Mrs. Arthur Benton was appointed postmistress, a position she held until the store

was sold in 1967.

Mr. and Mrs. Aurel Bourque had the store and post office for a short while and in 1968 the post office operated out of Jack Nobles garage with his wife as postmistress.

Mr. and Mrs. Duggan purchased the store in 1968. Mrs. Malt Stevens operated the store and was postmistress from 1969-83 when Patrick and Shirley Yates purchased the store.

Shirley Yates was appointed postmistress, a position she will hold until her resignation takes effect in May when new owners take possession.

Canada Post Corporation officials told a large group of concerned citizens at Limehouse Memorial Hall March 8 that Limehouse will not have a postmaster appointed. This effectively ends 131 years of Limehouse having a postmaster in the community.

## It's dream come true for new store owner

"It's been a dream come true," said Della Gaskill-Cadwallader.

The new co-owner of the Limehouse General Store says it's wonderful to move back to Limehouse. "We love the area and the community. Something we've always wanted to do was to work together in a small community."

Her husband Mike and she were both born in England. Della lived in Limehouse from the time she was 7 years old and left when she was about 18.

The couple moved back to Limehouse three years ago. May 2 they will be taking over the operation of the General Store, formerly operated by Shirley Yates.

Mike is a foreman at Continuous Colour Coat in Rexdale while Della is a reservations agent for Air Canada. They met while Della was on a holiday in England and they were married in Great Britain.



Della Gaskill-Cadwallader

However, the post office and the general store should be one and the same, said Della.

"Canada Post is a large corporation and they are relying on the goodwill of the community and community spirit," she said.

The owners are excited about their new venture and plan to make some changes in the near future with the store. One of the ideas is to open a small tea room, said Della. Scones and cream would be a specialty. A country crafts room with antiques is another possibility, she said.

"I'd like to make it a community place and a meeting place."

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After five years as postmistress of the General Store for 131 years, the Limehouse Post Office Shirley Yates is retiring. There has been a rural post office in the back room of

the General Store for 131 years. Approximately 278 families on the general and rural routes get the mail from the Limehouse post office.

## MICROWAVE COOKING

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New class begins:  
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### NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTON QUARRY LANDFILL STUDY GROUP

Reclamation Systems Inc. (RSI) of Milton, Ontario is proposing to develop a solid waste landfill in the Acton Quarry. A Study Group is being formed by RSI to assist the public in developing an understanding of its proposal. The Study Group will hear presentations on specific topics related to the proposal. A question and discussion period will follow each presentation.

Interested organizations, groups and individuals who wish to have representation on this group are invited to apply to the Project Liaison Officer before March 30, 1988. Interested citizens are invited to observe the group meetings. Meetings will be held bi-weekly through to November 1988.

Questions, comments and requests for further information should be directed to: Ms. Jillian Daffern  
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