

Independent Phone Pioneering

(By Mr. A. D. Bruce)
No. 4 of Series

It is almost a certainty that the first telephone installation in York County, outside of Toronto, was in Newmarket.

In October, 1879, S. A. Russell & Co. of Newmarket, leased from Prof. Bell two instruments that were used on a private circuit. In May, 1880, the writer's parents took him to Newmarket and while in Danforth Roach & Co.'s store we saw a man speaking into a hole in a box that was attached to the wall. We were looking at a telephone being used, and the obliging clerk allowed my father to speak to a man in Danforth Roach & Co.'s store in Aurora. This telephone line was not for public use, but it was a long distance line, probably the first in York County.

In 1889 Dr. G. A. Langstaff of Thornhill made application to Markham Township Council for permission to erect a telephone line along the public highway, to Buttonville. Permission was granted.

Dr. Langstaff and his associates had erected a line from Thornhill to Edgley, on the 5th concession of Vaughan—before undertaking the extension to Buttonville. This was probably the first attempt at independent telephone service on a commercial basis, in York County. Dr. Langstaff was the chief promoter of this telephone system, and gave his personal attention to keeping the system in repair. By the end of 1891 there were fifteen telephones attached to the Langstaff system.

Within a few years Dr. Langstaff migrated to the United States, and when he had departed there was no person who was willing to undertake the duty of caretaker. The system fell into disrepair and finally became defunct. The good people of the Thornhill district had not become telephone conscious.

In the 1953 report of the Ontario Municipal Board on "Telephone Systems", there are listed five independent telephone systems in operation, that were organized previous to 1900, namely: Manitoulin & North Shore Telephone & Telegraph Co., 1892; Beatty Telephone System, 1895; Sprague Telephone Co., 1896; The Gillies Telephone System, 1899; The Fort Hope Telephone Co., 1899.

Previous to 1900, the development of telephone service in rural districts was almost nil. Rural dwellers were timid about undertaking so formidable an enterprise as the construction of a telephone system, while the Bell Telephone people were indifferent since their company was fully employed in developing service in cities and in connecting those cities by long distance circuits.

However, a desire for telephone service was growing in rural districts and here and there individuals began to take action. In 1902 Dr. Eastwood of Claremont constructed a system that was extended towards Goodwood. Very soon Dr. Darling of Goodwood reciprocated by erecting a rival system, while Dr. Ralph Brodie and his brother, Charles who was a veterinary surgeon and also lived in Claremont, erected still another telephone system out of Claremont.

In 1902 Mr. Alpheus Hoover of Green River became the leader in organizing a telephone association to serve the Brougham-Locust Hill-Whitevale area. This association approached the CPR requesting permission to install one of their phones in the Locust Hill station. This request started a chain of causes and effects that was so important that it can be regarded as a milestone in rural telephone development.

Mr. Hoover was informed by the CPR that his request could not be granted without the consent of The Bell Telephone Co. because that company had the exclusive right to install telephones in all CPR stations.

Mr. Hoover and his associates would probably have accepted the situation as something that was beyond their power to remedy, but Mr. W. F. McLean, M.P. for East York and publisher of The Toronto World, became interested. Mr. McLean was also an advocate of state ownership of public utilities. On every count the Locust Hill station telephone incident was "pie" for Mr. McLean, and he championed the cause of those who were endeavoring to establish telephone service in rural areas. He discussed the matter in his newspaper, from the platform and on the floor of Parliament.

Sir William Mulock was at that time Postmaster General, and from him Mr. McLean obtained a sympathetic hearing, although the two men belonged

Markham Tp. Police Rush 10-Yr.-Old Girl to Hospital After Shooting Accident

Ten year old Betty Walker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hilliard Walker of Box Grove is reported to be in satisfactory condition in the Toronto East General Hospital following a shooting accident, on Christmas Day. Seven year old Jim



my Walker pulled the trigger of his older brother's 22 calibre rifle and the bullet smashed through his sister's teeth and lodged in the roof of her mouth. The injured girl was rushed by Markham Twp. Police Constable Don Dukes to hospital at speeds up to 90 m.p.h. An emergency operation was performed to remove the bullet. Seventeen year old Kenneth Walker and a boy friend, Jim Bejari, had been using the gun for target practice. He later brought the loaded gun into the house when the family were preparing to sit down for their Christmas dinner. Following the shooting, Mrs. Walker tried desperately to summon a doctor but none were available.

WEDDING

STEWART-SHELKE.
The marriage is announced of Gordon S. Stewart, son of late Wm. A. and Mrs. W. A. Stewart, Cainsville, to Mary Jane Schelke, daughter of the late Fred H. and Mrs. Schelke Gormley, by Rev. Harold Frid, Toronto, on Dec. 23rd, 1954.

to opposite political camps. The appointment of a special Select Committee on Telephone Systems was sponsored by the government. This committee collected an immense amount of information. Among other things, that the G.T.R. as well as the CPR had an agreement with the Bell Telephone Co. giving to that company the exclusive right to install telephones in GTR stations.

The Government took action, carrying through legislation over-riding the above-mentioned exclusive clauses and placing the installation of telephones in railway stations under the jurisdiction of the Dominion Railway Board, now the Board of Transportation. This legislation was of the highest importance. The activity of the Government created an atmosphere of expectancy. The opinion grew that the Government contemplated operating long-distance telephone business, leaving to municipalities or to private enterprise, local telephone service.

Suddenly, like a "bolt from the blue", the announcement was made that Sir William Mulock had resigned and had been appointed Chief Justice of Ontario. At the time of Sir Wm.'s resignation, it was rumored, among his constituents, that he had resigned because the Government would not go as far as he desired, in telephone legislation. This rumor may have been groundless, yet his resignation had come with startling suddenness.

The rebuff that the CPR had given to independent telephone promoters at Locust Hill, the agitation conducted by Mr. McLean, the debates in Parliament, the proceedings of the Select Committee on Telephone Systems, had impressed the public and—in rural districts—had fanned the smoldering desire for telephone service. Like a conflagration the rural areas were swept by a wave of telephone development. Independent telephone associations, joint stock companies, municipal systems, came into being on every hand.

A new era had arrived. In rural Canada social and economic life experienced a revolution. This great transformation—and it was great—was wrought by men who were novices in telephony. These men explored, they ventured, they made serious mistakes, they paid for their mistakes—and forged ahead.

Man Must Pay for Township Trees, Judge Rules

A communication presented at the last regular meeting of Uxbridge Township Council from A.W.S. Greer, informed council that Judge Pritchard found the municipality entirely right in demanding payment from J. W. Walker of the 6th con. for certain trees cut by the hydro road allowances adjacent to his property and which Mr. Walker had removed to his own farm and later cut into lumber. It was the decision of the court that Walker must pay the township \$400 and court expenses.

Reeve Geo. Todd Seeks Wardenship Of Ontario County

Reeve Geo. Todd of Pickering Township for three years reeve and one year deputy-reeve, has indicated that he will seek the wardenship of Ontario County next year. In 1949, William Westney, reeve of Pickering, was named warden.

At the closing session of Ontario County Council it appeared that three Reeves would be in the field for the 101st wardenship.

Reeve Harry Peel of Port Perry also stated that he would be in the running. He has also represented his municipality for three years on county council. The last reeve from Port Perry to be named warden was Meri Fletcher, 17 years ago. From away back in Rama Township, the farthest township in the county, Reeve Wilfred Hart has indicated he will try to bring the wardenship to his municipality. The last warden to come from Rama was named 74 years ago, in 1880.

The 1955 warden, who will present when Ontario County observes its centennial next year, will be elected by the members of the county council in the afternoon of January 18. A gold watch has been presented to the retiring Warden of Ontario County, on the occasion of the closing session of the Ontario County Council. Reeve Rae M. Ferguson of the town of Uxbridge, the oldest sitting member of the council, presented Warden Garnet Wilson of Cannington with a watch as a token of esteem from his fellow members of council.

In making the presentation,

Another beginning
Here comes another brand new year...
May it prove richly rewarding to you and yours in good health, happiness and the fulfillment of your most dearly cherished desires.

THE MANAGEMENT & STAFF
of
THE STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE

as the session drew to a close at noon, Reeve Ferguson said that the watch was being presented as a token of appreciation for the leadership and the fair and efficient manner in which he had occupied the Warden's chair this past year. During his term in office, said Reeve Ferguson, Warden Wilson had accomplished much, including the beginning of the extension of Fairview Lodge

SHOPPERS NOTE

Stouffville Retail Merchants announce that their places of business will be closed this Friday night to allow staffs and management to enjoy New Year's Eve.

The Merchants' Committee of the Chamber of Commerce also announce that a special meeting for all storekeepers will be held next Tuesday afternoon, Jan. 4th at 2:30, to discuss store hours for 1955.

Claremont Farmer is Top Corn Grower

Ontario County Corn Growers have chalked up some impressive yields in their first contest held this past year. The top yield of 132 estimated bushels per acre was grown by Mr. Bob Lewis, Claremont, R.R.3. Seven of the twenty growers enrolled in the club had yields of over 100 bushels while the average for the whole was 88 bushels per acre.

At the Club Banquet held in the school house, Altona, the winners were presented with their awards. Mr. Norman Lehman, Chairman of the Ontario County Corn Club was in the chair. In his remarks Mr. Lehman pointed out that the name of the club would have to be changed as the 75 Bushel mark they had set had been surpassed by most of the club members.

In the absence of Mr. H. L. Fair, Agricultural Representative, Mr. John Gill, Assistant Agricultural Representative, announced the prize winners and called on the various donors to present their prizes. The head table guests were introduced by Mr. Norman Hogg, Uxbridge, R.R.2. The various donors were warmly thanked for their support during the year by Larry Doble, Uxbridge, R.R.3.

A film on the importance of fertilizers was shown by Mr. Wm. Weir, Agriculture Representative from Ormeau. The results of the Ontario County 75 Bushel Corn Club

Name	Address
1st—Bob Lewis, Claremont, R.R.3.	
2nd—Paul Wellman, Claremont, R.R.3.	
3rd—Larry Doble, Uxbridge, R.R.3.	
4th—Ralph Veitch, Uxbridge, R.R.4.	
5th—Joe Nighswander, Claremont, R.R.3.	
6th—Mel Johnson, Claremont, R.R.3.	
7th—Norman Hogg, Uxbridge, R.R.2.	
8th—Frank Beilby, Claremont, R.R.3.	
9th—Norman Lehman, Claremont, R.R.2.	
10th—Bert Lewis, Stouffville, R.R.3.	
11th—Lloyd Wideman, Stouffville, R.R.3.	
12th—Walter Carter, Claremont, R.R.3.	
Tie—Allan Meyers, Claremont, R.R.3.	
14th—James Tompkins, Uxbridge, R.R.1.	
15th—Orval Freiz, Claremont, R.R.3.	
16th—Edgar Pollard, Uxbridge, R.R.1.	
17th—M. S. Ferguson, R.R.3.	
18th—Murray Dunkeld, Claremont, R.R.2.	
19th—Almer Rennie, Blackwater, R.R.1.	
20th—Jack Morgan, Claremont, R.R.1.	

All winning varieties were Funks except 3, 4, 7, and 17th which were DeKals.

Child Crash Victim Buried Tuesday at Claremont



Debra-Ann Beelby died in two-car crash near Markham in which her parents and aunt were injured.

The Community of Claremont

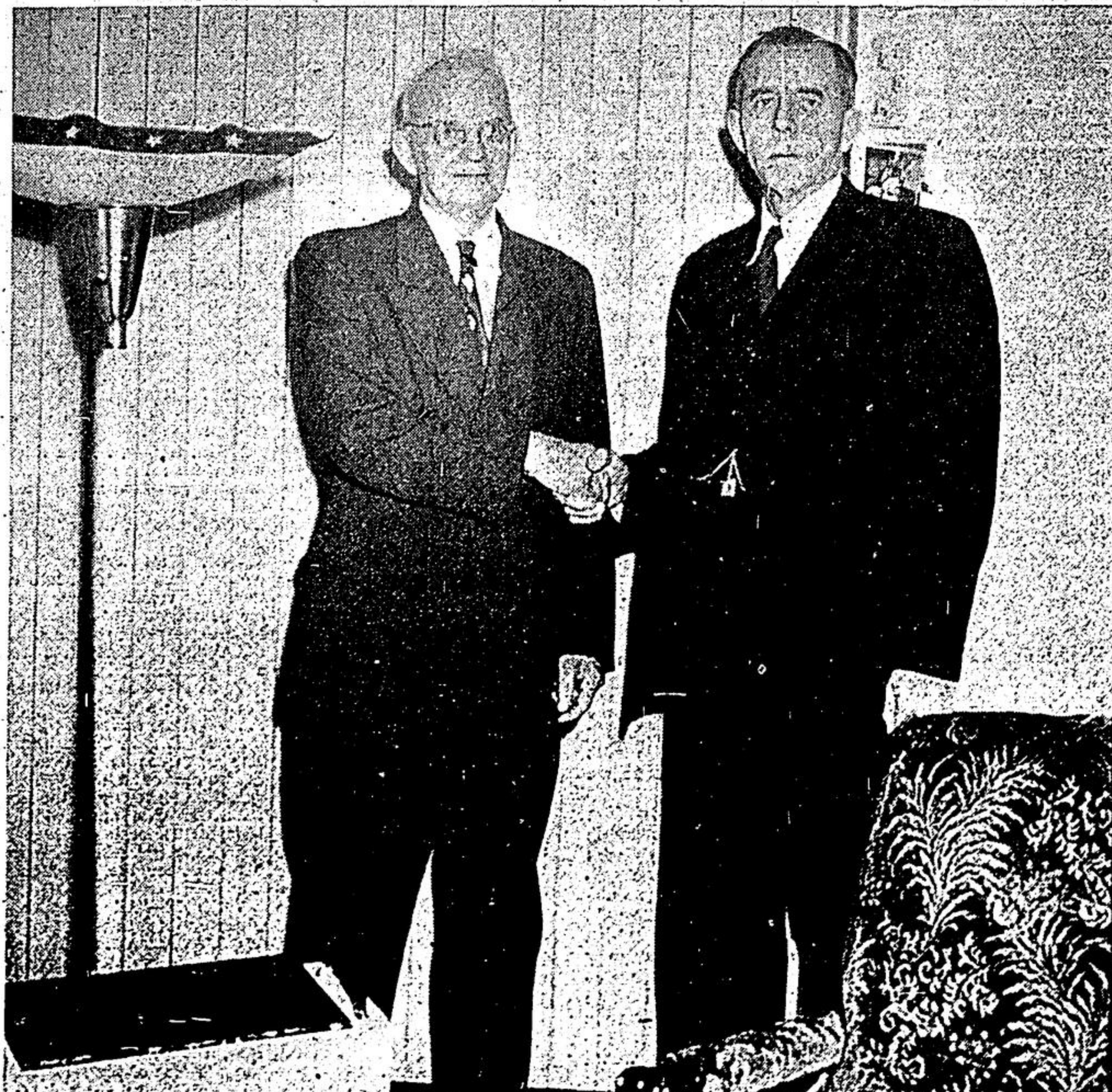
paid its final respects to little Debra Beelby, 15-month-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Beelby, killed on Friday evening, Christmas Eve, following a two-car collision on No. 7 highway east of Locust Hill. Although her parents had recently moved to a new home in Toronto, Debra remained in Claremont and was living with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Beelby. The funeral service was held at their home on Tuesday afternoon, conducted by Rev. H. Lackey of the Claremont United Church. Burial was made in the Claremont Union Cemetery. The pallbearers were Misses Sandra-Ann Hill, Sandra Davis, Betty Redshaw and Joyce Norton.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Beelby, Phyllis Beelby and the driver of the other auto, Mr. Bernard Coughlin, Hope St., Toronto, were rushed by ambulance to the Toronto General Hospital. Mr. Beelby was released on Sunday. Mrs. Beelby and Phyllis are expected home later this week.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Beelby were driving from Toronto to Claremont where they planned to spend Christmas Day with their parents. According to Provincial Police, the westbound Coughlin car misjudged a curve in the highway and smashed head-on into the Beelby vehicle. Debra was thrown through the windshield from the force of the impact. Mr. Ken Beelby, a cousin, and Mr. Willis Turner, both from Green River, were two of the first to reach the accident scene. They aided in freeing the injured from their cars. The home of Mr. Glenn LeVett was turned into a temporary emergency first-aid station. Ambulances from Pickering, Agincourt and Markham later rushed the injured to hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hall of Orillia and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Warburton and children of Toronto spent Christmas with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ira Burkholder.

BID FAREWELL TO CLAREMONT STATION AGENT



Mr. Wm. Drew, retiring Claremont CPR station agent, was honored recently at a community presentation, Mr. and Mrs. Drew were presented

with a floor lamp, a chest-of-drawers, a clothes hamper and bath towels. Mr. Drew has been station agent at Claremont for the past

nine years. They will move to Peterboro at the end of this month. Pictured above is former roadmaster Mr. Levi Linton (right) bidding farewell to Mr. Drew. Some of the beautiful gifts may be seen in the foreground.