

The Phone Rings In E.K. When They Want Santa

East Kildonan has its own Santa Claus — only his name isn't Santa, it's Steve.

But Steve might as well be Santa to wide-eyed East Kildonan children who find the name S. Claus, 256 Oakview avenue, in the telephone directory.

S. Claus means just one thing to a young boy or girl — he's that jolly stout fellow with the big ho-ho from the North Pole who every Christmas lands his reindeer and sleigh on house-tops and comes whisking down chimneys.

Since nobody ever told them East Kildonan isn't the North Pole, and since they never heard the whispers about Dr. Brock Chisholm, the children run to a telephone — any telephone — and tell S. Claus the many things they want for Christmas.

And Steve, who has been S. Claus for a long time, never lets them down. He takes down their requests and says he will do his best — and if they don't get just what they ask for, well—there are many, many children in the world, most of whom ask for the same things.

When Steve is at work—he's a car cleaner for the CPR—Mrs. Claus takes the telephone messages (about 40 a day during the Christmas season).

"They ask me about the reindeer — especially Rudolph — and I say they're all fine," smiled Mrs. Claus, who says she loves getting the calls and talking to the children.

"Parents call me and say they have their children beside them and that their children were bad that day, and shouldn't get any Christmas

call from Santa," she continued. "I never tell the children Steve isn't Santa — why ruin a child's dream?"

Mrs. Claus met her husband at a party and when he was introduced to her as S. Claus, "well I thought they were kidding me." She soon learned Steve was S. Claus and now she's getting used to it — they've been married 21 years.

Although the telephone calls from eager children interrupt her household chores, Mrs. Claus doesn't mind.

"The voices of those children," she said, "it does something to me." Mr. and Mrs. Claus have two children of their own — one 19 and the other 16.

"Some day maybe I'd like to get some reindeer," she grinned. "That would make it complete, don't you think?"

December 22 1956