

By MEGAN HOLSAPPLE
The Compass

After a converted school bus crashed into a home in Upper Island Cove last Friday, Aug. 15, area residents have organized a petition to close a portion of Drover's Road.

Raymond Fowlow of Upper Island Cove was driving his bus-camper down the steep hill on Drover's Road when he lost control of the vehicle, crashing headlong into Gordon and Bertha Drover's house and striking a parked car before coming to rest against the house next door belonging to the Drovers' daughter.

Bertha Drover was in the kitchen getting ready to go out with her husband and grandson Richard Mercer, 8, when the accident happened.

"I heard a noise and the dividers from the kitchen and the dining room started shaking and everything started shaking and the next thing the bus came right in," Drover said. "It came in through the porch and tore out the fence and tipped up on its side and smashed up my car. The car saved my daughter's house. If the bus hadn't hit the car it would have gone right into my daughter's house."

The door to the Drovers' porch was open and their washing machine was thrown into their kitchen by the force of the impact, landing only a foot or two from where their grandson had been standing.

"I saw the bus coming down the hill through the window," Richard said. "I looked up and all I saw was yellow and black, yellow and black, and I got scared. I ran so fast I was in the living room in a second."

Richard has had trouble sleeping since the accident.

The porch was completely removed from Drover's house and broke through the bus's windshield, landing on top of Fowlow, who was the only occupant of the vehicle.

Fowlow said he was rescued by his friend Gary Smith of Bishop's Cove. He said Smith entered the bus and was able to remove him from the vehicle while firefighters used chain saws to cut through the bus's exterior.

"I'm glad to be alive," Fowlow said.

Fowlow was kept overnight in the hospital for observation and released with minor injuries.

No one was injured in either house, although the Drovers and the residents of three other houses were evacuated after firefighters feared that propane tanks which had fallen off the bus might explode.

"But there was no one hurt," Drover said. "I've got to be thankful for that. Only one more minute and we would have been out the door and we would have been killed. We were getting ready to leave. Everything happens for a reason."

Police seized the bus for examination. Fowlow said he thinks mechanical failure was respon-



Megan Holsapple/The Compass

ACCIDENT DEBRIS - Bertha Drover's porch roof was torn whole from her home when a bus crashed into it last weekend. The rest of her porch was reduced to splintered wood.

sible for the mishap as the bus stalled before the accident.

Fowlow said he will be paying for the damage done to Drover's house. Bertha Drover had been working on her yard all summer.

"When I looked out there was nothing, only destruction," she said. "But no odds about that. No one was hurt, that's the main thing."

About six hours after the accident the bus was finally removed. Drover said a small wrecker didn't succeed in getting the bus out, so a larger wrecker had to be brought in.

The Drovers submitted a petition to the Town of Upper Island Cove requesting that the section of road between their home and the next house up the hill be closed off, making the road a dead end

on both sides. The next regularly scheduled meeting of council is Sept. 15, but mayor Winston Lynch said with elections scheduled for the end of September the issue may be put off to the new council. He said closing the road is an issue that has been discussed before, but he can't comment on what council will decide.

The RCMP says the incident is under investigation.