

SOUTH PEEL'S PEOPLE

By **RON DENNIS**
Staff Reporter

PORT CREDIT — It took over 35 years, but Charles Gunning worked his way from pushing a pencil as a clerk for a bush pilot outfit to his current position as Director of National News for CBC radio.

From his downtown Metro Credit resident says he has very little time, he means it.

When he's not marshalling the forces of the reportorial team across Canada, he is either catching up on his reading or acting as a one man public relations bureau for the Credit Valley Dramatic Society.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

But the natural assumption that he was badgered into the public relations job because his wife Elaine is an actress for the group, is not true.

"I really got started by going to the plays and writing short critiques afterwards," he explained. "I'm definitely not a drama critic but I got interested and began sending

them to the former Port Credit Weekly.

"It was one way to keep my hand in the writing game."

Writing news copy is like riding a bicycle, he said. "You never quite lose the touch even though this job leaves me very little time for writing any more."

"If I ever leave this job, I think I would like to get back to the reporting again," he said.

In the true tradition of journalism, Gunning worked his way up through the ranks from the lowly position of copy clerk.

LONG-TIME INTEREST

"I've always had an interest in writing," he said. "My father was a printer for the Winnipeg Free Press so I guess the business got in my blood."

From the wilds of Northern Ontario where he was a clerk for a bush pilot company, he was hired as a copy clerk for Canadian Press in Winnipeg. From there, he worked his way to the position of reporter on the now defunct Vancouver News Herald.

Finally, in 1946—after serving a three and a half year stint in the RCAF intelligence branch in Vancouver—he joined the CBC as a radio reporter.

His assignments have been many and diversified but the one he remembers most fondly was covering a Newfoundland general election in the late '50's.

"Politics down there is a most personal thing," he recalled. "It was most enjoyable because everyone there is on a first name basis with all of the candidates as well as being on top of all the election issues."

GREAT FLOOD

Another time, he flew the "flood desk" in Winnipeg during the great flood in 1950. He and his family were one of thousands who were evacuated to safety from the turbulent waters of the Red River.

Spare time is almost unknown to the radio journalist. Even when safely ensconced at his Cumberland Drive home—away from the clattering teletype machines and bustling newsroom—it is only another chance to catch up on his reading.

"I really would like to get in some gardening at home but I just can't find the time," he complained.

In the course of a day, he reads on the average, six newspapers and an equal number of periodicals from all over the world.



CHARLES GUNNING

Staff Photo

SPW - May 29, 1968

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MAY 29 1968