

Murray, Chic - Bob Peck

THE NEW MISSISSAUGANS

He felt he owed something

It was in the late fall of 1957 that Charles (Chic) Murray, now the reeve of Mississauga, took stock of things around him and decided . . . "I owe somebody something."

And from that time on this man with a sharp forceful business brain, a lively humor, and an infectious laugh has never stopped paying back the debt he felt he owed.

"This is going to sound cory, but I'll tell you anyway," he said with his familiar chuckle when I asked what precipitated his move into local government.

"I was born in Toronto, but moved to the United States with my parents while I was still young. After spending 20 years in the states I came back to Canada because I felt it was the place to make a good living.

"Well," he paused, "I made a very good living here, and I decided I should do something to offset this. That's the reason I ran for council — apart from having a tax gripe which I never did manage to do anything about," he said changing quickly, as he does, from the serious to the jocular.

After two years' initiation as a councillor, Chic Murray plunged in deep . . . very deep.

He was elected in 1957 to start as councillor for Ward 3, which has since been divided into what are now Wards 3 and 6.

After two years he was elected deputy reeve of

the township in 1959 and the plunge was on.

Now in his eleventh year on council, Chic Murray has been chairman of the finance committee for 10 of them. That in itself was no mean task.

"One of the most difficult problems we've had in recent years has been financing the growth of the municipality and trying to control the growth so we didn't cripple ourselves financially," he observed.

"I think we have done this pretty well so far, but it had to be a team effort. I don't think the general mill rate has risen over two mills all the time I have been involved with finance."

Peel County Council must have recognized Chic Murray as being a good helmsman for the money boat, too. He's now serving his ninth year on county council and for seven of those years he has been finance committee chairman.

But my real pride and joy is not the balanced budgets. It's the Huron Park Recreation Centre.

In 1963 after I was acclaimed as deputy reeve I promised I would produce a recreation centre. Council went along with my idea unanimously and the Huron Park centre was the result," he stated.

Chic speaks of his relationship with Mississauga Mayor Bob Speck — their respective terms of office as the municipality's No.

1 and No. 2 have run concurrently — as a "great partnership."

"Mind you, we don't always agree. But I think we have a unique relationship in this municipality. If Bob and I have a difference we thrash it out until we decide who is right, and when we go into council we go together. We do our fighting some place else," he said.

Mr. Murray, who is director of sales for Erie Iron Works Co. Ltd. and is in charge of sales nationally, sees unlimited potential for Mississauga in the future.

"I see the town's population growing by at least 20,000 each year. I don't think we can stop it.

"I see tremendous growth industrially and residentially, with the Erin Mills and Markborough Property developments in the West Credit Valley under way this year.

"And I foresee, soon, the start of a good transportation system within the town."

Looking back on his council service, the reeve said "I have loved every minute of it. It's a battle of wits, particularly at

country level and I enjoy this. Sixty-five percent of the money spent in the county comes from Mississauga and up to now we have had only 30 percent of the vote, and it used to be less.

"Bob and I are always jockeying with these guys to make sure we get our real share."

Every weekend, Chic gets away from the worries of business and the affairs of the town.

"My wife, Jo, and I go off to our cottage. I've had a sauna bath built about 10 feet above the river, and down at the plant I had an aluminum slide made up. So I can come straight out of the sauna, hit the slide, and whoosh into the river. It's beautiful!

"I first used it on Good Friday this year. The temperature of the river was 30 degrees."

How d'you keep up with a man like Murray?