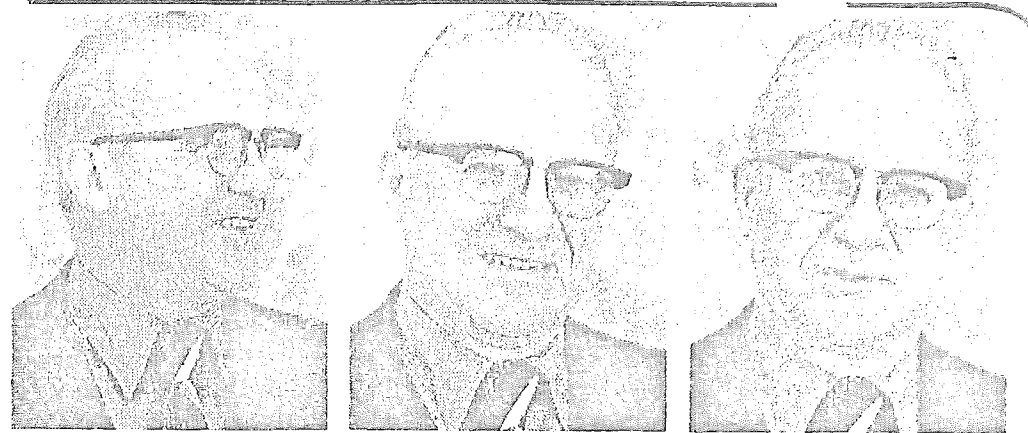


a v.i.p. and me

(by KENNETH ROWE)

"I feel that one of the things that offends people about government at all levels, is the reluctance of the civil servant to volunteer information. I think he has an unnatural reticence; he feels he should not go beyond a certain point, and this in turn, is interpreted by John Q. Public as a reluctance to be co-operative."



By KATHLEEN A. HICKS
KENNETH A. ROWE:
Industrial Commissioner:
Town of Mississauga
PRESIDENT:

Mississauga Industrial Association

ME: When you took on the post of Industrial Commissioner in 1967, what expectations did you have for your job in Mississauga?

MR. ROWE: I recognized that it was a wonderful opportunity. I further recognized, from having been on our planning board here for seven years prior to this, that it was a community that just had to grow. All the attributes that my community needed we had. So I suppose, I thought "How do you go about bringing this to a reality without over-emphasizing, without being brash." We have to have a community where the industry and commerce that is carried here fits in; it shouldn't stand apart, it should meld, so it doesn't become too noticeable, so people won't get upset by it. I think in any community that is going to grow and prosper, the whole situation has to be a good deal for everyone.

ME: What is the complete entailment of being Industrial Commissioner?

MR. ROWE: Our advertising is slated to pique people's interest in Mississauga, and this is what it does. Last year, my office handled 3,000 incoming telephone calls. I take a personal interest in all the calls, that is part of my responsibility. We had 400 appointments in the office, and another 400 where people just came in. I feel that one of the things that offends people about government at all levels, is the reluctance of the civil servant to volunteer information. I think he has an unnatural reticence; he feels he should not go beyond a certain point, and this in turn is interpreted by John Q. Public as a reluctance to be co-operative. In order to do a promotional job or a sales job, and I consider that this is my function, you have to take some of those risks. When people come, you attempt to satisfy the caller by giving him the

answer or by getting the information for him. There is a keen and honest desire to be of assistance to those who wish to get information on Mississauga. I feel it is part of the whole job to promote all aspects of life in Mississauga. If one attempts to isolate industry from the rest of the community, then it will be just that, isolated, and will never form an integral part. In my view, we have an integrated community. We are interdependent, each on to the other. The residential growth is dependent to a great extent on job opportunities, and job opportunities won't come unless we have the people to fill the jobs. Non of this will happen unless the environment or the atmosphere is right to promote both. I drove 7,000 miles last year just around town. I went out on 136 calls to meet people. This job is in part public relations, as much as it is promotion of the industrial community.

ME: What promotion spiel do you give to new companies interested in moving to Mississauga?

MR. ROWE: I don't know that I altogether go along with the term "promotional spiel." (He laughed.) But the message I have, to state it simply, is . . . Mississauga, a good place in which to live, to work, and to play. This is the whole theme of my promotion, and everything we do is slanted in that direction. We do this pictorially in our promotion work. We not only talk about it being a good place to put industry, but that we have people, and we have the amenities with which people will be happy. Educational system, police department, fire department. All these things go to make an integrated community. You just don't have what Mississauga has by accident — somebody has to work at it.

ME: You just renewed a \$9,000 contract with CFRB Radio for prime time commercials. What led to using this medium for advertising, and has it paid off?

MR. ROWE: Shortly after I joined the municipality, one of the things I had to do was come up with an advertising policy and an advertising program and, through a process of elimination, it came to me very clearly that much of our industry came from the greater Toronto area and it could best be reached through radio. CFRB was by far the most

popular station for the age group I wanted to reach. Wally Crouter has his own unique way of putting things across. There's no question in my mind that it has paid off — it brought a user and a seller together the first day it was on. The advertisement is on once each day, three days a week, every second week and each ad is different — and the spots rotate between 5:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. We are reminded almost daily of our radio ads, so we know that they are still getting results. This is one of the reasons why my name is used, so if someone wants to talk industry, we have opened a personal channel. It is a real good way to start out with a prospective client.

ME: Your involvement goes beyond settling industry in the Town, to what you call "Service beyond Sale." Explain this over and above the call of duty function you have taken on.

MR. ROWE: I think one could, with some degree of conscience, say — Well, when the industry gets here, my job should be completed. I truly and honestly don't believe that. I feel that the best industrial promotion I can have is a recommendation from an existing industry. My analysis of how I should act is simply this, that not only do I feel I should get the industry here, but I should do everything within my power to keep him here and happy. Industry likes to go where it's going to be happy, where they get co-operation, where the political climate is good.

ME: When you accompanied Councillor Glenn Grice on a business trip to Frankfurt, Germany in October of '72, did you find this trip rewarding?

MR. ROWE: This department has been involved in these trips for years. I try to make two a year to bring the word of Mississauga to other countries. These trips take three or four months to plan. In the case of the Frankfurt trip, we worked very closely with the promotional departments of the Canadian Banks, and the Ontario Department of Industry and Tourism. We get from these sources names of industries that have shown some interest in coming to Canada. We then write to these companies and invite them very formally to a

strive to provide job opportunities for youngsters

Continued from Page C2

ception: in this instance, in the Intercontinental Hotel in Frankfurt. We had 52 industrialists from all over Germany attend. I would say that these trips are certainly rewarding in the sense that they create new contacts and new friends in Mississauga.

ME: You have said that any job is easy when you love it. That do you love most about being Industrial Commissioner, and what have these past six years meant to you?

MR. ROWE: That's a loaded question. Certainly I do love my work. I like meeting people, and I like the challenge that is offered. I know that every time an industrialist comes to see, he is comparing what I am doing for him to what one of maybe five other Industrial Commissioners is trying to do for him. He is the fish and we are all fishing for him. I enjoy the challenge of presenting a better presentation than someone else. I've lived in this community since 1954. I bought a house in Applewood Acres, and we're still living in it. I've enjoyed raising my family here; I enjoy living here; I believe in the community. So it is an opportunity for me to return something to it.

ME: Your interest in Toronto Township's future brought about your appointment to the Planning Board. What did you learn from this seven-year experience?

MR. ROWE: That provided me with so much more than I ever realized. It was a continuing exposure to that which was happening in Mississauga — Then Toronto Township — planning for residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Having been a part of the Planning Board for that time was a unique opportunity to learn and prepare me for this job.

ME: The Mississauga Industrial Association was launched ten years ago, and you are serving your second term as President. How beneficial is this Association to industry?

MR. ROWE: Its function is to provide a common meeting place for those who are members of it, where they may get to know each other, to exchange ideas, and to let each company know what the other produces. Participation by the average industrialist in Mississauga is not as high as it might be, and for that reason, I don't think he is getting out of this Association as much as he could.

ME: You have been given the title, "Mr. Mississauga." How do you feel about this tag of importance?

MR. ROWE: Well, I suppose if it is a tag of importance, of course, I am very proud. I'm flattered that people would think of me in that context. I would like to think I was deserving of it. I think we all are sufficiently imbued with ego that we like to hear these statements. I'm not that different in that respect than anyone else. Of course, it's gratifying.

ME: You hail from Ottawa and began your working career with the Ottawa Paint Company in the thirties, and went on to Montreal to join Brandram-Henderson in 1940. What were these first years in your working life like?

MR. ROWE: Like anyone else you tend to look back and

think only of the parts that were enjoyable — the nostalgia. We all feed on nostalgia for some reason or other. Like we say — "The good old days," — but were they so good? I guess they were happy days — I'm sure they were. I had a brother and two sisters, and we used to do a lot of riding. My Dad had a riding stable, and we rode in a lot of shows; so these associations are dear to me. After moving to Montreal, it became more difficult to maintain the family contact because my parents were in Ottawa. I suppose it was a "growing up" time, a time of exposure to parts of life which a little guy from Ottawa hadn't seen. You get into the big city of Montreal and find it to be a tremendously large city. I spoke no French, but learned to get by. Again, I got into a line of work which I enjoyed and at which, I guess, I had some reasonable amount of skill. My wife and I were married in in Montreal, and my time there was very beneficial.

ME: In 1949, you moved to Cleveland, Ohio, to work for Ferro Corporation, which produced porcelain enamel. Enlighten me on this part of your life.

MR. ROWE: They also had a paint division and I was appointed Technical Director of that division. Cleveland was a tremendous city, we enjoyed it very much. Two of our children were born there. That was a new living experience that was pretty good for Ken Rowe. We saw other parts of life a long way from home, with no friends. I think you learn to make do, to look at different aspects of your job, and grow within yourself.

ME: What thought was behind moving to the States and five years later back to Canada to work at Canadian Pittsburg Paint Company in Toronto?

MR. ROWE: It was a very straight forward operation as far as I was concerned. I had selected industrial coatings as the line in which I wanted to work. This meant the type of coatings that are used on appliances, automobiles and industrial type products. The opportunity to learn was twenty times as great in the United States as it was in Canada. Very frankly, I looked at it very selfishly and thought that if I was going to make anything of myself, to be a cut above the average, then I had to do this in the States. The decision to come back was made when Ferro decided to discontinue its paint division. We thought about remaining in Cleveland, and I took another job. But it was a joint decision between my wife and I to come back; she hadn't been that happy there. We were a long piece from home — her home is New Brunswick, and mine Ottawa, and there were close family ties. So I suppose nostalgia played a part in our coming back to Canada.

ME: You were Chief Chemist in charge of general industrial development for 13 years at Canadian Pittsburg. What did this position entail?

MR. ROWE: It was a position in their research division, it was practical research, where you worked something out in the lab and then took it out into industry to make it work

there. It was extremely challenging; in many ways it probably was as challenging as what I am trying to do now. We pioneered in Canada at Canadian Pittsburg the use of modern acrylic coatings on aluminum siding. The technology was just being evolved and we were fortunate enough to be a part of it. When I started in the paint industry, if we could get paint dry in two or three days, it was quite a record. When I left, we were putting coatings on metal that would dry in 20 to 30 seconds, and last for 20 years. To be part of that technology makes me very proud and I will always remember it.

ME: When you first started in the paint industry, you had an experience that resulted in the staff presenting you with a putty medal. Fill me in on this funny happening.

MR. ROWE: That happened in 1940. Everyone should have a talisman of some sort to remind him that he isn't so damn smart. I made an error in carrying out an assignment I was given, and the factory superintendent, a great guy, wasn't going to let an opportunity go by to see to it that I got my come-uppance. (He now lives in Mississauga too.) One noon hour, when I was heading out for lunch, suddenly everyone appeared out of nowhere and he went through the formal speech of presentation and gave me this half gallon paint lid full of putty with the inscription "Presented to Kenneth Rowe for General Proficiency in Drier Technique." It has hung in every office I have had since that time. If I get feeling too big for my britches, I take a look at it and think — Uh, huh, you have been known to make a mistake. It's something that I have always kept and it fulfills a useful purpose.

ME: Do you have someone in your past who is partially responsible for your success in the business world?

MR. ROWE: I worked for a man in Montreal at Brandram-Henderson who was probably the most difficult person in the world to work for. He was a perfectionist; he demanded everything that you had to give. In his own way, he was very appreciative of it, but he never let you know it. I suppose that man had more effect on me as an individual, simply by making me strive, by making me work harder, by making me try to rise above what appeared to be my potential.

ME: You have three children, Ruth, 22, Richard, 21, and Elaine, 16. In these difficult times of teenage rebelliousness, drugs, etc., what hopes do you hold for their future?

MR. ROWE: I think their future and mine are somewhat interconnected in this respect, and I am serious when I say this: I strive to provide job opportunities for youngsters in their own community, so that they don't have to leave the family environment, as I had to, to find suitable employment. If we can provide challenging opportunities satisfying opportunities, a good environment in which the live, work and play, I feel that the other segments of their lives will be looked after. I feel the harder I work at what do, the greater the opportunity will be for my children, your children, and all the children of Mississauga.