

# Mississauga's loss is the OMB's gain

By LINDA REED

Henry Stewart, like the New York cop Serpico, couldn't be bribed.

The carrot was dangled in front of his nose only once during his 19 years on the local political front, he says.

That occurred when a prospective gas jockey offered Henry \$500 to push through his service station application. The shadow of corruption fled when Henry picked up a telephone and threatened to let the chief of police in on the deal.

Mississauga's city manager leaves at the end of this month for a \$33,000 seat on the 12-man Ontario Municipal Board. He was appointed Friday for a three-year term by Attorney-General Robert Welsh.

Henry (Hank to his friends) is the seventh senior civil servant to leave the administration offices of the new city of Mississauga. Three accepted jobs with the region of Peel.

He has been a civic employee here since 1955. Since that time he has numbed his body sitting through thousands of council meetings and fielded as many calls as a Bell Canada information operator.

He has enough stories about Mississauga to match all the bylaws.

Henry often tried to make residents see the humorous side when they called to rip a strip off the township.

He was successful when an irate man complained that a flock of starlings were roosting on an overhead telephone wire and dropping a line of white on his freshly paved driveway.

"I have a feeling those starlings are from Etobicoke," suggested Henry as the man burst out laughing.

Another time he played doctor when a woman complained that her neighbor buried a cat in a flower bed adjacent to her property.

"It gives me the creeps," said the woman, but Henry — who was a farmboy — didn't see her point. He told her to take two aspirins and rest. She did and called back to thank him.

## Rescue

Cats often plagued Henry. They scrambled up trees and remained there for days while their owners begged Henry for help. Once he sent a brand new \$80,000 aerial firetruck to rescue a feline in distress. The event was recorded by the press and Henry held his breath as he waited for the public to abuse him for using their firetruck to rescue a cat.

"It was on the front page of one of the newspapers but nobody complained," said Henry.

Henry, 46, born under the sign of Leo, has watched Peel grow from a rural embryo. He hails from a Bolton farming family of six boys and two

girls. All his brothers play an important role in agriculture in Southern Ontario. The name of Stewart is as familiar to farmers as Borden's or Serge milker.

## Debates

Henry was a middle child in his large family. They travelled to their one-room school by horse and buggy.

He was a teenager in the romantic forties when girls did the jitterbug at Weston Collegiate in short black tunics. Competition was keen among students. Henry often had fierce debates with fellow student, Jean Black, who he married much later after an eight-year courtship. He was fond of public speaking and considered becoming a clergyman. His family was active in the church and he had a "wonderful minister" during his teenage years.

Life, he recalls, was pleasant. He often thinks of Peel when people had few material goods or public services.

After graduating from the University of Western Ontario in 1955 with a Bachelor of Arts, he stumbled on a job with Toronto Township when his brother showed him an advertisement in the newspaper. He planned only to stay long enough to save money for more university education.

It was the start of a career which spanned two exciting decades in the history of Mississauga. He loved his job

as assistant secretary-treasurer of the Toronto Township planning board. His brain caught fire at the idea of creating a new town from scratch.

Henry started work when the late Mary Fix was reeve. He remembers her as an "exciting" woman who tapped her cigarette at a furious pace when angry. His memory bank still retains a ladylike scolding she gave him for a leak to the press she attributed to him.

He became close friends with former councillor Vic Vignalle, a Jamaican, who ran a florist shop in Dixie Plaza. Henry was impressed with Vignalle's ability to oppose a roomful of angry residents and still win their vote at the polls.

"He used his own judgement on matters which made me respect him".

Henry worked extensively with major developers and helped process all subdivision plans when this city was known as the Township of Toronto. He remembers when Bruce McLaughlin was a university student with small subdivisions of perhaps 10 to 12 homes.

His eyes light up at the mention of the Robert Speck years in Peel. Speck he says, had a "tremendous knack for getting people to work for him."

"Some people say he was flamboyant but I think of him as a quiet person who

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over

was truly a people-person. He could solve a ratepayer problem and consider the long term results as well. He wasn't afraid of making mistakes."

### Haunted

He is still vaguely haunted by the memory of the late Albert Crookes, a self-declared ombudsmen for Toronto Township. Crookes arrived at every council meeting with the Statutes of Ontario, ready to correct any error on the part of elected representatives or the administration.

He finds it rewarding to think of the improvement made in the Lakeview area. When he joined the township, Lakeview was filled with shacks and sewage ran in the ditches. He helped many residents with renovation plans which called for winterization of cottages, construction of foundations and bricking over a frame bungalow.

In 1965 Henry was appointed deputy manager and deputy clerk of Toronto Township. He continued this dual role until 1969 when he moved up to deputy town manager of the Town of Mississauga. He became city manager last December prior to the creation of the new city of Mississauga in 1974.

He is a member of the board of directors of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and has served on the education committee of

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**Henry Stewart, city manager of Mississauga, has lived in the Peel area all his life. He has been appointed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Soon it will be his job to settle disputes between developers and ratepayers in Ontario. He sees it as an extension of his municipal career. All his life he has worked with people.**

## The Stewarts find new home convenient

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the clerk-treasurers' association of Ontario for seven years. He is also on the committee to advise the Ministry of Colleges and Universities on education needs in local government as it pertains to the course in community colleges.

Mr. Stewart is not among those who condemn highrise apartment living. There's a place for this lifestyle he says although he thinks it less than ideal for children.

### CAUTIOUS

He has a cautious approach when it comes to any criticism of Mississauga. His only comment was a wish for something better than the business strip along Dundas Street. Visits to Europe make it difficult for him to comprehend some people's contention that Mississauga might be overpopulated in some areas.

His decision to leave the city he helped create was not a light one.

"I like to think I'm going to the Ontario Municipal Board rather than leaving Mississauga. It's a new side of what I've been involved in all my life," he said.

Henry admits that the OMB has received considerable criticism from Metro recently but believes it acts as a beneficial check and balance for local municipalities.

Henry has lived only briefly in the city he helped create. After a few years in Toronto he and his wife moved to Streetsville (a separate town until January of this year) so she could walk to the high school where she taught English and history. They have lived there since and find it convenient.

Their home is at the end of Vista Heights Drive and faces a large empty

field south of the defunct Streetsville Water Tower. Antique pine cupboards, a 10-foot fireplace and lots of books make a comfortable home for the Stewart family.

Henry and Jean had their family late in their marriage. So, now, when most couples their age have teenagers the Stewarts are romping with four active boys from 4 to 11.

"It has its disadvantages and advantages," said Henry who juggles swimming, skiing, hockey practises and trips to the Toronto French School which their oldest son attends.

### ROUGH

This year Henry is managing the Streetsville PUC hockey team with a 15-year-old coach. Despite his enthusiasm for hockey, he hopes his boys will drop out when they are teenagers. He says it's rough and can't be used through a lifetime like tennis or skiing.

Henry has great admiration for his 82-year-old father, his namesake who works as the general storekeeper at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

"He was worried when he had to take a driving test at 80 but he made it. He drives to work every day. I sure hope I have that spirit at his age."

Henry is among 12 members sitting on the Ontario Municipal Board. His duties will take him throughout the province. He will not rule on Mississauga applications for some time.

If he's anything like his father he may become the grand old man of the OMB.