

Started As A Reform Candidate

Chic Murray looks forward to six-week vacation

By FRANK TOUBY
 Yesterday marked the end of Charles M. (Chic) Murray's 15 years of public office. He was defeated for re-election as mayor in last October's municipal elections by reformer candidate Dr. Martin L. Dobkin.



CHIC MURRAY: Looking forward to vacation

Yet, strangely enough, Murray himself was a reformer when he first ran for the Ward 3 council seat in Toronto Township (Mississauga's predecessor) in 1958.

"I don't think that's so strange," Murray chuckled as he straightened up his desk at town hall preparatory to leaving. "I never saw a council candidate who wasn't. Everyone is a reformer. That's how you get elected."

When Murray was running for his first elected post, the issues were taxes.

"We had a lot of problems with rising taxes at that time," says Murray. "It was a time that saw rapid growth in residential construction but not in industry. Taxes were high mostly because of the increasing school rate with damned little industry to support it."

"Now in Mississauga we have diversified industry. I wouldn't want to be in Oakville during a depression because it is almost a one-industry town."

The reform issues changed. Taxes were not the big citizen complaint in last October's election; over-growth was.

Murray went down to defeat under a protest vote that gave politically unknown Dobkin an 11 per cent voter majority.

Murray was surprised at his election loss.

"I was depressed after the election, but I'm over that now," Murray says. "I'm paying attention now to things I intend to do in the future."

He declines to specify what he intends for the future, laughing: "I'm no longer a public person any more."

But he still has opinions about municipal government and the future of Mississauga as a city under its new "reform" administration.

"I think taxes could rise quickly," he says. "That all depends upon future policies."

It's a statement reminiscent of his campaign when Murray derided some of Dobkin's platform planks saying they would be too costly and increase taxes.

"I'm not going to make any predictions," he says, "but I've got a feeling things are going to cost

Mississauga taxpayers a lot more in the near future."

Murray says one of his biggest achievements as a politician was as reeve of Mississauga when he and Mayor Robert Speck got Peel County to agree to finance a share of building costs for hospitals.

"Hospitals used to be financed by door-to-door canvassing; charity, really. We had one hell of a fight at county but if we hadn't, the two hospitals wouldn't be the size they are today."

"This town has been a very stable place to live in the past 15 years. We went from 30,000 to 200,000 population in that time with a very stable tax rate."

"I think the town has been well planned. I'm not proud of the planning on Bloor Street east of Dixie, but west of Dixie there is the same number of people per acre and it's as different as day and night."

"But the area east of Dixie was planned 12 years ago when planning was a baby science."

"I think Erin Mills is a tremendous asset to the town. And I think Meadowvale is very well planned," says Murray.

He is presently the president of Gibb

Manufacturing in Lakeview. The firm manufactures wire products such as record racks, dish drainers and shopping carts.

Murray is also on the board of directors of Erie Iron Works Ltd. in St. Thomas. That firm, which owns Gibb, produces such things as wheelbarrows, fertilizer spreaders and lawn rollers.

Murray was born in Toronto in 1914 and attended high school in Buffalo.

"You didn't go to university in 1932 unless you came from a rich family. And I didn't," says Murray.

His father had a manufacturing business which he lost in the depression.

"I don't think a depression would be a bad thing today. I wouldn't wish it on anyone, but we do now have a spoiled generation that never really

had to work—really work."

After high school he went to work for Ralston-Purina Company as an office boy. He earned the minimum wage of \$15 a week.

In 1937 he returned to Toronto and sold book bindings.

The next year he married Josephine Keith of Buffalo. She later became a naturalized Canadian.

For the next three years Murray went into the house-building business in Islington. "We built in the Chestnut Hills area." But he and his partner went broke in 1941.

Then Murray moved to London to start with a steel company as a 40-cent-an-hour millworker. Three years later he had advanced to sales for the firm.

In 1950 he went with Erie Iron Works. "I own a good piece of it today." Then Erie, a Canadian firm, bought Gibb from an American company two years ago.

His political career went from councillor with the Township of Toronto, to deputy reeve. When Mississauga became a town in 1968, Murray defeated now-Ward 6 Councillor Caye Killaly to become reeve.

When Mayor Robert Speck died in April 1972 following a heart-transplant operation, Murray was appointed mayor by council.

The Murrays have four children: Chad, 33, opera manager; Gibb Manufacturing; Bob, 31, is articling in law; Jim, 29, is in real estate; Susan Somerset, 31, is a housewife.

The Murrays lived for 19 years in Applewood Acres, then moved three years after the children left.

"We had a four-bedroom house and were rattling around in it," he says.

The Murrays are planning to move soon into a new Shipp high-rise in Applewood.

"We're getting a penthouse apartment so we can have a good view of all the trees in Mississauga," says Murray.

But his most immediate plans are to spend six weeks this winter in Barbados.

"This is the first time in my life I've ever had six weeks to myself," he said with a grin. "That I am going to like."

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Oil pipeline idea draws support

Many Mississauga constituents are advocating an Edmonton to Montreal oil pipeline to create an all Canada fuel policy in letters attached to an energy questionnaire, Mississauga MP Don Blenkarn says.

Of 1,500 responses to the survey from Blenkarn's office, more than 91 per cent agreed Canadian oil should be used to solve eastern Canada's energy shortage.

Blenkarn believes such a pipeline should be built through northern Ontario as it would have spin-off benefits in attracting industry to the north and help to decentralize growth.

He says the government is "pussyfooting" in waiting for an end to the Arab nation's oil embargo or alternate solutions. Blenkarn doesn't feel an oil policy will spark an election in 1974.

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