

# Crown Attorney Handles 15,000 Cases Every Year



For McWilliams Every Week Is A Busy One

A big operation in a small package. That's Halton County's crown attorney's office, from which Peter McWilliams, 41, prosecutes 15,000 cases a year and handles one inquest a week. But it's pretty hard to find the youthful crown attorney sardined in his tight quarters along with a secretary, office equipment, and a small legal library. Most often, he's out.

To help with the fantastic work load, Mr. McWilliams has the services of part-time assistants picked from a cadre of county lawyers.

### WANTS ASSISTANT

He has been seeking a full-time assistant since April with out success.

He says county officials now plan to increase his limited work area in Halton County's administration building, including office space for a full-time assistant crown attorney.

"With the great increase in volume of criminal work and with provision of legal aid, there's a need for at least one full-time assistant," Mr. McWilliams said.

"Even before legal aid, the increases in criminal work required one. Now, the need is greater. It's a hard-working of fice, and, in my opinion, there should be as many assistants as there are magistrates."

Mr. McWilliams pointed out that several counties with lower revenue than Halton do have full-time assistant crown attorneys.

### GENERAL DUTIES

"As to the general duties of a crown attorney, people may assume the work is entirely in the courtroom.

"But the greater part of a crown attorney's work should be in his office, consulting with the public, and the police deciding which cases should be prosecuted, and preparing evidence to make sure everything is properly presented.

"Toronto's crown attorney never prosecutes cases — he's in his office all the time.

"But not having a full-time assistant, I'm not able to be in mine very often."

### HALTON COURTS

Part of Mr. McWilliams' duties, occupying five full days every week, is to conduct prosecutions in magistrate's court, county court, and supreme court.

Taking magistrate's court first, on Mondays he and his assistant divide their time between two Milton courts. On Tuesday, it's Burlington, on Wednesday, Milton again; on Thursday, the Crown is in Oakville; and on Friday he has the choice of Oakville or Burlington.

County courts are held at Milton in both old and new courthouses, while the Ontario supreme court holds its sittings only in the new administrative centre.

In addition, the crown attorney occasionally attends sittings of juvenile and family courts in Milton.

He also decides whether or not a case is to be appealed.

"On summary convictions I

can launch an appeal myself but on indictable offences I can only recommend appeal action to the director of public prosecutions.

"There's hardly a month gone by when there aren't one or two cases on which I could recommend an appeal," Mr. McWilliams said.

At inquests, the crown attorney's duty is to advise coroners and to question witnesses.

### DEATH ON ROAD

This facet of his work brings him hard up against death in many forms. But a larger percentage of his time is taken up by death on the road.

In his annual report on Halton County highway fatalities, Mr. McWilliams fingers the drinking motorist as the greatest single cause of traffic deaths.

Last year's statistics showed 27 deaths. To combat the high mortality rate, the crown attorney wants to see legislation making breath, blood and urine tests compulsory.

He cites the classic case of a young motorist who accidentally killed three female relatives in a car smashup after spending the evening drinking in two hotels and a private home.

After the accident, the young driver was unconscious and unable to give his consent to police wishing to sample the alcohol content of his blood.

### FINED \$150

As a result, he could be charged with nothing more serious than driving without insurance and drinking under age, on which charges he paid fines totalling \$150.

"Generally, I don't advocate the need for wider police powers, except to make breathalyzer tests compulsory," the crown attorney said.

"In Halton County, I'm pleased to say, the police have conducted themselves scrupulously in order not to exceed their powers, depending primarily on citizens' willing cooperation. It's a far surer basis for authority than powers given by statute.

"Breathalyzer tests are more accurate than most speedometers and just as accurate as the

tools with which doctors have to make medical decisions from day to day.

"Anyone who questions their accuracy has the privilege of insisting on a blood test. There is no question about the accuracy of that."

### NAMED CROWN

Peter McWilliams was appointed Halton crown attorney on April 1st, 1958. He graduated from Osgoode Hall in 1953 and spent five years with the Milton law firm of K. Y. Dick, now Judge Dick.

He comes from a long line of lawyers. His mother Lorna Margaret McWilliams, of Toronto, a grandfather; and an uncle, all practised law.

On December 31, 1965, mother and son achieved a distinction unique in Canadian legal circles when both were appointed Queen's Counsel on the same day, bringing the total of McWilliams family QCs to 3.

### OAKVILLE RESIDENT

Mr. McWilliams lives at 61 Brookfield Drive, Oakville, with his wife Frances and their three children, Brian, Susan and Darcey.

On weekends the young crown attorney likes to get away from it all by sailing in summer, skiing in winter.

After a week working in and out of his Milton office's cramped confines, he wastes no time heading for Ontario's open spaces. The wider the better.

### Shows Preparation of Lamb for Fair Entry

The regular meeting of the Halton 4-H Sheep Club was held on August 14th at the farm of Albert Hunter. Club Leader Joe Willmott gave a demonstration on preparing a lamb for showing. The final quiz for the year was then given to the members.

The display committee of Sandy Bennett, David Cation, Janet Hunter and Lyle Stokes then discussed their fair display plans. Refreshments were served by Mrs. Hunter and her daughters.

## STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS

With the opening of Sheridan College on September 18, Students will require housing accommodation in this area. Residents who can provide single or double rooms, with or without board; flats or apartments; are requested to telephone or write to . . .

MRS. M. MADILL

Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology

98 Church Street East — Brampton

PHONE 459-7533

### Test School Traffic Lights Plan for Strategic Points

A new school crossing control system will go into effect when school resumes Tuesday.

Traffic lights installed near the end of the last term by the E. W. Bliss company in front of Harrison Public School on Rexway Drive will be turned on controlling traffic at a crosswalk for school pupils. If it works satisfactorily the Georgetown Public School board will install similar lights at other strategic points.

The control lights will only operate during those periods when the children are going to and from school.

The lights would replace the school pupil safety patrol which was abandoned last September because two schools, George Kennedy and Harrison, became junior schools with Grade 6 the senior grade. Board members said they felt grade six pupils too young to act as safety patrollers.

### Two Young Farmers at Leader Training Camp

Bill Alexander, RR 1, Norval and Marilyn Kirkwood, RR 4, Acton are at Geneva Park this week where a Leadership Training Camp is being conducted by the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario. Geneva Park is on Lake Couchiching.

Marilyn, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey C. Kirkwood, has completed 14 4-H Homemaking club projects, having obtained honors, and has attended the 4-H Homemaking Club Conference at the University of Guelph, in addition to winning the 4-H Homemaking Club Trip to the Canadian National Exhibition in 1963. Marilyn is presently vice president of the Acton Junior Institute and was joint secretary of the Acton Junior Farmers and Junior Institute in 1966. Marilyn plans to attend Hamilton Teacher's College this fall.

Bill Alexander, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mac Alexander, has completed 20 Agricultural Club projects, having won 12 trophies, including the J. E. White-lock Trophy, presented to the outstanding 4-H Club member in the county each year. Bill has attended 4-H Leadership Week at the University of Guelph, and the National 4-H Conference in 1964. He was a delegate on the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario Spills Tour. Bill has been a member of the Norval Junior Farmers' Club for the past six years, and has held the offices of director and secretary. His farm enterprise consists of 150 acre dairy farm, where 55 purebred Jerseys are milked.

Each delegate at the Leadership Camp takes part in the

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