He speaks for newspapers, coast to coast

By Roy Downs Canadian Community Newspapers Association-the name is emblazoned on the door.

It's an office on the second floor of an ancient office building on Shuter St. in Toronto-just a stone's throw from the hubbub of Yonge St. and the Eaton Centre.

He sits behind a wooden desk in a small office in the front corner-a telephone, an inout basket, filing cabinet, a briefcase, a few shelves and a window that looks out at Massey Hall across

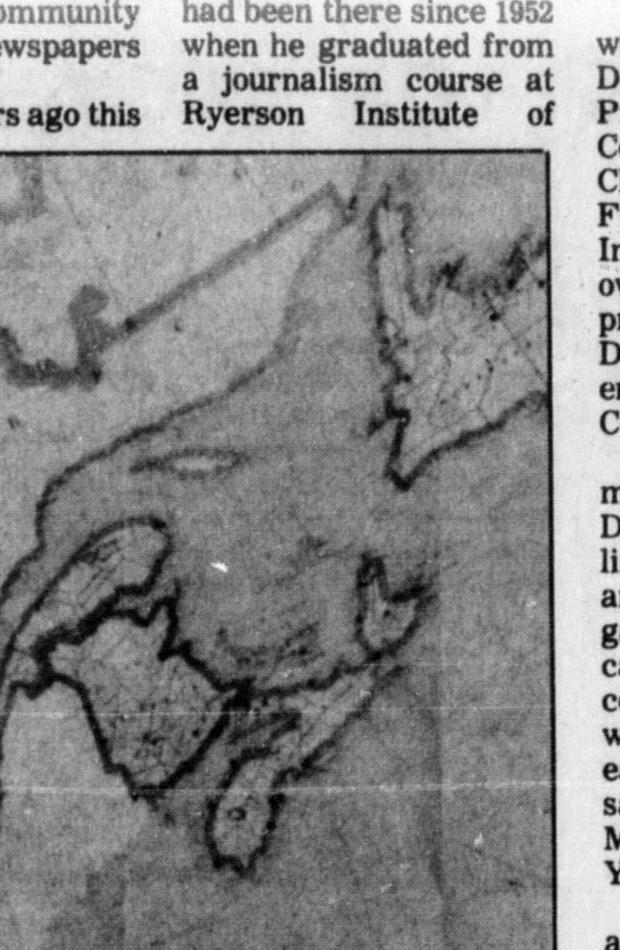
the road, the only props for the scenario.

Behind the desk sits Jim Dills, Executive Director of CCNA, the man with his finger on the pulse of the community (or weekly) newspapers of Canada.

Until two years ago this

week, Jim Dills sat in an

office on Main St. in Milton, keeping his pulse on the community, in his role as publisher of The Canadian Champion. He had been there since 1952 Ryerson Institute



Jim Dills, two years later. Former publisher of The Canadian Champion, Jim Dills is enjoying his new job as Executive Director of the Canadian Community Newspapers Association. The national office is a liaison with six provincial newspaper associations and covers 546 members from coast to coast. Pins on a map on one wall of his Toronto office indicate the location of the member weeklies.

CCNA: Small office, big role

is mainly a desk job, but it does get him from one end of the country to the other, at least once year, with some shuttling

back and forth to Ottawa. His greatest role is in provincial associations that represent the 546 community weeklies all the way from Columbia to Carbonear in Newfoundland. That means attending all the provincial conventions, which are held annually, as well as the national convention which moves from province to pro-

vince each year. Last year's national in Edmonton, which helped to co-ordinate, drew 400 representatives from 150 papers. Next year's is in Halifax and he is already deeply involved in its planning.

One provincial group covers British Columbia the Yukon. Alberta

provincial associations. drawn from the national send board of directors. There are 17 directors, four from Ontario and two or three representing the federated

provincial associations. The board meets three times a year; the executive committee monthly. Directors don't pop into the office every day of the week, so Jim is pretty

well left alone to run the CCNA's affairs. describes his work as be-"like a one-man ing CCNA began as Canadian Weekly Newspapers

Association 62 years ago. The "weekly" part of the name was changed to "community" a few years ago, to represent the changing style of the member papers, some of which are now published twice or three times a

"CCNA represents the weeklies in a number of different areas," Jim explained.

One role is education the upgrading of people third covers Atlantic in the community news-Canada. Saskatchewan, paper field. The group Manitoba and Ontario works with various have their own educational institutions

in upgrading the journalism and advertising executive committee, programs, helping them better-trained beginners into the field. association upgrade qualifications of people in the industry, through regular bulletins to publishers and the monthly magazine. Seminars and "better news-

> Representation of the industry in government circles is another CCNA service. Jim often sees government federal representatives, sometimes in reaction to pending legislation that would newspapers hamper sometimes seeking interpretations of legislation.

paper" contests are also

The association also represents its members in the field of advertising. At the moment, CCNA does not have a sales force promoting weeklies to the large national advertisers, but all that will change soon when the office expands and adds a presentation bur-

The bureau would require two full time staffers. They will present information on the newspaper industry to major

advertisers and advertising agencies, when the new arm of CCNA established early in the

new year. In the field of education, Jim has plans for a affairs conference for newspaper editors, to be held in Ottawa. "It would give local editors an insight into federal affairs. We need the knowledge, and access to the knowledge," he suggests. "I

hope I can bring it off." He has already been to Ottawa several times, studying legislation that affects the weeklies, such as the post office act and the elections act.

weeklies have yet sought any specific legislation, he said, but the association plans to draft a brief to the Royal Commission on Newspapers in the near future. One area of concern right now is a federal proposal to tax advertising supplements in the weeklies.

When it was decided the federal government wasn't planning to advertise for its 1981 cer sus, Jim Dills was one of the first to lodge a protest. Later the decision (Continued on Pg. B4)

Technology (now renamed Ryerson Polytechnic Institute). He was managing editor of the paper several years, then publisher since 1966. Two years ago this

week he and his brother Dave, owners of the Dills Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., sold The Champion, The Acton Free Press and The Independent, Georgetown plus the central printing plant in Acton to Douglas Bassett, President of Inland Publishing Co. Limited:

The sale was a traumatic experience for Jim Dills. On one hand, he relished the newspaper life, and his work at the paper gave him a chance to carry out his main hobby, community service. was that service that had earned him, earlier that same year, the title of Milton's Citizen of the Year for 1977.

But faced with growth and a dulled enthusiasm to finance the expansion that seemed necessary, coupled with the realization that none of his family appeared ready to step in and take over, it made the Inland offer to purchase appear to be the only answer.

It was with a touch of sadness he emptied his office of all the personal mementos that had buil up over a span of 26 and closed the door to that part of his

"retirement" last long-eight months, to be exact.

For several years, he had assisted the national newspaper association by publishing its monthly bulletin. His son Steven, a Ryerson grad like his father, had been assistant to CCNA's executive director and one of Steven's responsibilities was putting out the monthly bulletin his father had published for several years.

Shortly after Jim and Dave sold The Chanpion, Steven resigned his CCNA post to become publisher of a new weekly paper in Onoway, Alberta. Shortly afterward, CCNA's executive director resigned his post. The national office was left with no leader, and no assistant.

Because he now had the time, and because he had experience with the monthly CCNA publication, Jim and his sister-in-law Kay Dills of Acton filled in voluntarily to make sure The Canadian Weekly Publisher former editor of The Acton Free Press.

It wasn't long before

the CCNA executive approached him to be the new executive director. The Association spent six months without one, and it needed someone with Jim's background and administrative experience to step in and take

Jim had put the eight months of "freedom" to use. A keen chronicler and collector of Milton's history, he had spent the interval organizing voluminous file of clippings, pictures, notes and

He served ex-officio on town's Downtown **Business** Improvement Association, and spent a lot of time on Milton Historical Society's research and planning for the future of the old Halton court house.

And he worked on the Rotary Club project, the development and plementation of the plans for former Kernighan House beside the mill pond into a community use building.

He didn't spend much time in carpentry and picture-framing, other two hobbies. "I'm lousy with my hands, just don't have the patience I guess," he admit-

But time lay heavy on those hands, that had always been so busy in the work of publishing an award-winning community weekly. "Without deadlines to live to, you get a frustrated feeling,' he recalled.

After eight months of puttering at various projects and living without the deadlines to which he had become accustomed, the CCNA invitation to step in as executive director was readily accepted.

If he wasn't going to be newspaper publisher any more, his life's work, his administrative talents and his participation in a host of community activities had prepared him for just such a post.

Today, he's a commuter. He catches the GO Bus to Toronto at 7.35 a.m. and it brings him home again around 6 p.m., every Monday to Friday. He tries not to bring office work home evenings and weekends, but it's difficult. Sometimes he does his "extras" on the bus to and from work.

At first he thought he might be able to do a lot of the work from his home. But so far the job has meant his full-time attendance at Toronto office. His support staff in-

cludes two women. Sister-in-law Kay Dills has since taken over the

publication of the Weekly Publisher, and his brother Dave (former publisher, Acton Free Press) has given invaltool, a booklet called "Community Markets Canada."

Is it different? Yes, in many ways; no, in many

"At least I don't have to come out (like The Champion) Wednesday," he grinned. another, and some items go on forever. It's an extremely challenging job, it's hard to cut it off men-

Fridays a lot more than he ever did. At CCNA, Friday is the termination of one week's work, and Monday launches a new At the newspaper, Friday was "just another

He now appreciates

news-week." And he still finds time for some of the community activities, too. Jim is still president of the Historical Society, and

Carrier

day in the middle of our

Provincial

ton Scouting districts. named a member of a new group, the Milton Hospital be responsible for raising and administering funds

Son Steven has left the

HOW IT WORKS:

pumps it indoors. During

out of your home.

OAKVILLE MISSISSAUGA 844-7354 MILTON BURLINGTON

24 HRS. SALES AND SERVICE

NOVEMBER SALE

The Carrier ADD-ON

HEAT PUMP

Years Ahead

ORDER NOW AND GET UP TO

still active in the Rotary Publisher of the Drayton Club where he's a mem- Valley weekly in the ber of the John Martin same province. Mark is House-Livingston Park due to graduate in marproperty committee. He ine biology from Univer-Commissioner for Boy Scouts in Halton, which means he is the liaison

Council and the four Hal-He was also recently

Foundation, which will for future hospital expansion and major capital projects. Wife Shirley, who used

to work part-time at The Champion as darkroom technician and assistant. "officially" retired but still comes back occasionally to help out through holiday periods or when someone is off sick. They are both still ctive in St. Paul's United Church, and attend the church's Mr. and Mrs.

Onoway paper and was named

sity of Guelph this year. and Paul is working full Publishing plant Acton, apprenticing photo-mechanical

Daughters Catherine and Carolyn are still in

The Dills have no plans to leave the Milton they have come to love. They are currently expanding their Campbell Ave.

As for The Champion. Jim admits he still enjoys reading the paper. He pointed out the enjoyment is increased now, because it's all new to him, compared to the years when he knew in advance what was being published.

Thanks,

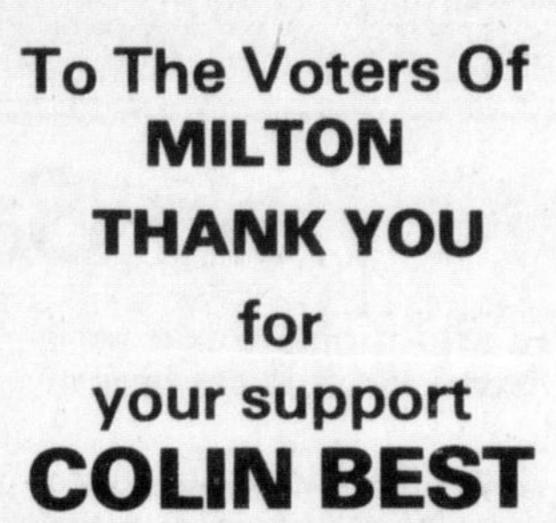
Millon

Brad Clements,

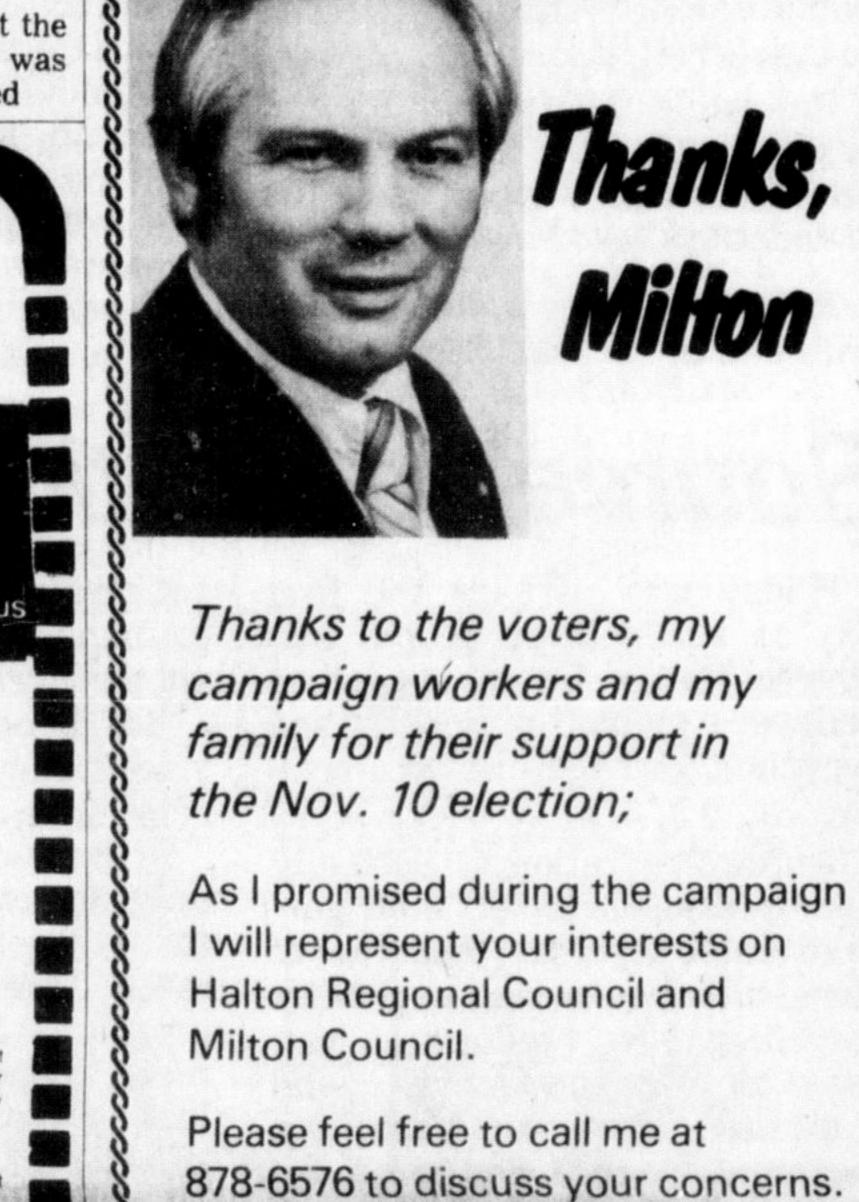
Councillor-Elect,

Ward 2, Milton.

CONTRACTOR CONTRACTOR









MILTON MALL

878-2629 MILTON

EASY PARKING

Open Mon.-Fri. 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Sat. 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

