

One-Man Welding Operation Becomes Thriving Industry

A success story that makes the Horatio Alger heroes look like sissies in their travels from "rags to riches" happened right here in Oakville to Malcolm McDonald who created and now heads the McDonald Welding Company, 235 Speers Road.

In less than 15 years he built a business of repairing oil drums on a part-time basis to a company with current sales of over \$1,000,000 a year. And the end is not in sight.

His first job after World War II was in the instrument department of the B.A. Oil Clarkson refinery, and when the company needed a lathe operator Malcolm McDonald obligingly became a journeyman machinist.

His versatility is amazing. Later in his B.A. career a need for welders developed and Mac McDonald again came up with his support although he told his foreman at the time "I don't want to make welding my life's work."

CHOOSES WELDING

Three months later however he had a pipe welder's card in his pocket and whether he realized it or not he was off on the first leg of an amazing business success.

With borrowed equipment he took on the part-time job of repairing B.A. Oil's 45-gallon oil drums and the company

dumped 30 of them in his backyard as a starter. Soon there were 800 leaky drums in the yard and McDonald Welding was off the ground when it hired its first employee. The latter repaired the drums while Mac McDonald bought a 180 amp. AC welder and started on other repair jobs.

ON HIS OWN

It was a layoff that finally sent McDonald out entirely on his own. He bought a 200 amp. Lincoln welder and started landing contracts, his first being in the Toronto terminal of the British-American Oil's Montreal-Toronto pipeline.

Business got steadily better, with B.A. Oil, Ford and other Oakville area industries keeping the firm on the jump, and these contracts are still important to the business.

McDonald Welding doubled its sales in each of its first four years and by 1954 it had men working on jobs all over Ontario and Quebec. Some of the jobs were piping work at gasoline bulk distribution depots and soon the firm was erecting warehouse-office buildings at the depots.

FORMS SECOND FIRM

Since this work required special skills, McDonald made one of his smartest moves, forming Akela Ltd., a new company with separate people well qualified

to do construction work. This proved a happy forethought because during a slump Ford cancelled all outside contractors and this hurt the McDonald enterprise. Akela was rapidly expanding meanwhile, building gas stations, small warehouses and other structures.

With Akela and McDonald Welding combining their skills and business building talents sales hit about \$400,000 in 1959 and levelled off around that total in 1960 and 1961.

But expenses were rising if sales were not and Mac McDonald, typically enough, decided to double the business in 3 years, rather than push slowly ahead against the cost bite.

\$1,000,000 SALES
Drive and enthusiasm paid off, for Malcolm McDonald and his organization not only reached the goal but far surpassed it with sales up about 250 per cent to \$1,000,000 in two years. Sales in 1964 were even better and for this year another gain is expected.

Much of the secret appears to lie in the decision to diversify operations. McDonald started fabricating and erecting small and medium bridges. He got the 1964 contract for fabricating railings for highway bridges built by the Ontario government, amounting to nearly 25,000 feet of railing. Currently the firm is building 7,000 feet of railing

for the Peace Bridge between Fort Erie and Buffalo, and not long ago installed about half the pressure piping for an underground steam distribution system in downtown Toronto.

Much of this work requires the highest skill of welders and must withstand X-ray tests. Quality must be the highest. Although Mac McDonald credits much of his success to "luck", there are skills and good judgment evident in the rise of this one-man backyard welding venture that captures the imagination.

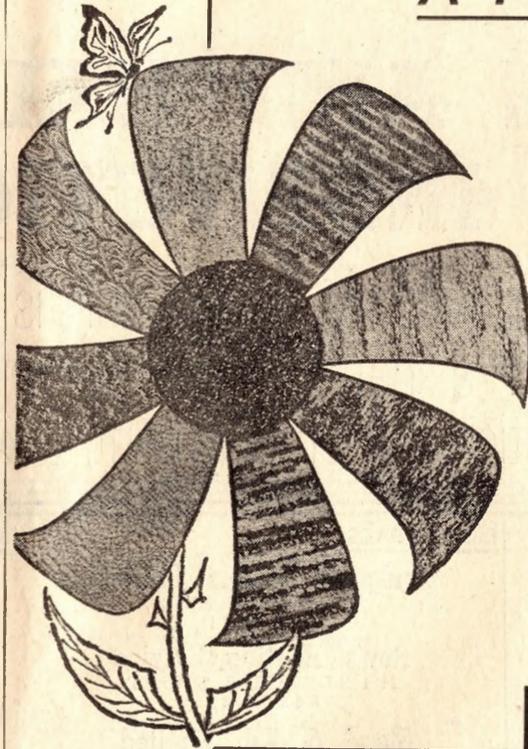
HE LOOKS AHEAD

Mac McDonald always looks ahead. Recently he added to the Oakville plant a 12-foot "press break" used to bend or break quarter-inch plate, twelve feet wide. This is one of the largest in the area for custom work he says.

"What else can we do?" he asks. And answers the question with "duct work, exhaust systems, breeching, stacks, hoppers, bulk bins, industrial trucks", and he adds, "we can supply and erect any kind of structural steel, weld practically anything in the shop or on location and as for piping we handle all phases in air, water steam, gas and oil piping."

Expansion continues in 1965. The firm is Canadian agent for O. L. Johnson trolley-track but is also negotiating with at least three U.S. firms to manufacture their products in Canada.

"If it is in the realm of the possible we can do it," says Mac McDonald, and he means economically and well.



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Industrial Land Prices Range From \$4,200 Acre

Oakville has more than 6,500 acres of land available zoned for industry at prices from \$4,200 an acre to prestige locations in excess of \$10,000 an acre.

The land is about six times the area already occupied by existing industrial operations but the ratio could conceivably change over the next few years as industrial growth continues and industrial public services are expanded to accommodate newcomers.

An example of the steady withdrawal process from the Oakville "land bank" was in 1963 when ten new industries began new construction or commenced operations in new plant facilities, while expansion in 13 others ate up more space. Last year there was an even more marked trend toward industrial growth as more than 20 companies extended their plants and about half a dozen newcomers came in to occupy hitherto unused land.

Apart from such huge construction projects as the Shell refinery and the \$10,000,000 Ford expansion, plus the subsequent \$25,000,000 truck div-

ision project, the use of Oakville industrial land is a steady but un spectacular process as a rule, taking time to make its cumulative effect felt on the economic life of Oakville.

Yet there is nothing to prevent an overnight surprise announcement similar to the famous Ford sale, that another huge area of Oakville has "gone industrial." There is a wide variety of sites available, the most enticing being the prestige locations in the \$10,000 an acre-group (and up) on the Queen Elizabeth Way. In contrast there is also acreage on what are called industrial roads where excellent sites are available to firms which have no interest in the advertising expenses given by highway sites. Such sites, according to the Oakville Industrial Development Department usually parallel the main lines of the two railways and are zoned for heavy industry where rail sidings can be provided.

It is this type of land that incoming industry can acquire between \$4,200 and \$8,000 an acre and what is of prime importance it is fully serviced. Oakville planners and town

authorities have shown foresight too in catering to small industries needing not more than two acres for their plants. The town has purchased a block of 22 acres which it plans to subdivide into an industrial strip with servicing completed within another year. Additional light manufacturing areas are spotted and available in the town including the central business section.

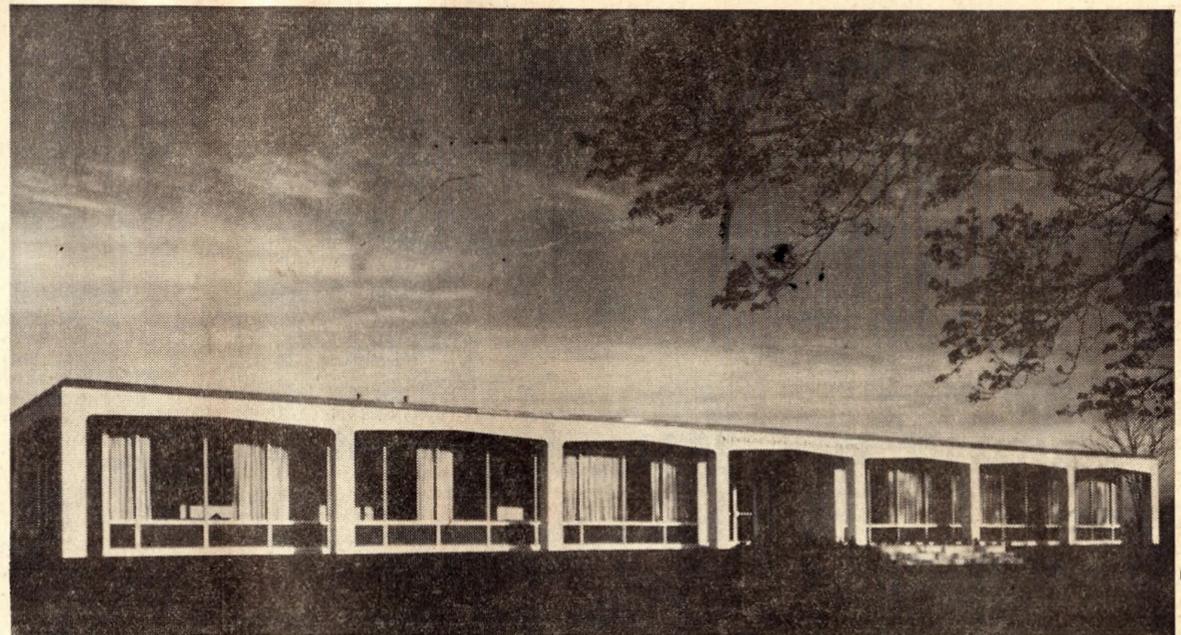
Since most industries have their specific manufacturing needs, these must be adapted to the size and shape of land, and the planning and zoning processes have gone ahead with this in mind. For example, all industrial areas in the southern part of Oakville area, or can be serviced by sanitary sewers, water, electricity, and natural gas. All roads are built to town specifications for industrial roads of the type which has proven most satisfactory.

Going even further, when an industry's exact specifications for essential services are known, the town can plan and install such services to accommodate the industry in those areas not yet serviced but within the zone of planned development.

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Freeze Dried Food Firm Active In Research Here

From fruits in the family breakfast cereal package to crab meat salad with cottage cheese in an igloo far north of the Arctic Circle, is a long stretch of culinary imagination, but nothing is really impossible with food in the space age.

And it's the job of Dr. Walter Smithies, president of the Oakville firm of Canada Freeze-Dry Foods Ltd., 579 Speers Rd., to research and develop new concepts of food processing, storing and shipping, with some of the most impossible conditions in mind for flavorful, fragile and perishable nourishment.

In the second year of operation in Oakville the Speers Rd. plant, research laboratory and science research centre, whatever it might be called, is consolidating its progress made earlier in the highly specialized treatment of freeze-dried foods.

These featherweight, natural appearing, dehydrated foods with immunity to temperature changes and return to natural freshness with the addition of water, have been shipped for use by travellers in the Himalayas, Arctic trappers and DEW line men, South American jungle workers, army research personnel and ordinary campers.

SALES GOING UP

When the firm located in Oakville two years ago in a utilitarian building on Speers Rd. the mainspring of its machinery was Dr. Smithies, then technical director for research and processing (which he still is) who has since assumed the presidency and reports with some gratification that commercial sales of the company's products trade-marked "Quick Serve" are mounting and that the advances made in 1965 in research, production and sales are now being consolidated for the moment.

Dr. Smithies gained world fame before starting his Oakville venture, as a pioneer scientist with the Food Unit of the Defence Research Medical Laboratory in Ottawa. The goodwill and encouragement of government researchers followed him to Oakville with formation of Canada Freeze-Dry Foods. The company was awarded a National Research Coun-

cil grant for further exploratory work in the field of food for use in normal conditions and under extreme temperature variations such as those found in the Arctic and the tropics.

The Oakville location of the firm was an obvious one since it was convenient to sources of supply of fruit from the Niagara Peninsula and the Golden Horseshoe fruit, vegetable and poultry farms where fresh products can reach the plant on short hauls for quick processing.

PRESERVING FOOD

There is application of basic preservative principles in the company's operations, and because in the freeze-drying process only the water is removed, leaving a lightweight product, easily shipped in compact form by air, but retaining all the original bulk and nutrition.

Low-moisture content allows

storage at room temperature for up to one year, yet retains freshness, and these, Dr. Smithies points out, are "all food" without water waste or unusable parts. Here in Oakville foods being processed through the freeze-dry method include fresh fruit and vegetables, raw and cooked meats, eggs, egg yolks, cottage cheese, lobster and crab meat.

A 10,000-pound freezer at 0-10 degrees below zero receives the fresh products at the plant. Some foods arrive already frozen and prepared for drying, while others such as onions, require washing and dicing before the freezing process. From cold storage products are loaded on aluminum trays with airspace between the stacked trays for heat transfer, and then returned to the freezer to await the drying process.

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