

T. S. Cooper, 83, drives from Markdale to Kiwanis weekly

By RALPH ADAMS

Looking back on his 43 years as a member of the Owen Sound Kiwanis Club, Tommy Stewart Cooper of Markdale believes his service club efforts have played a major role in making his busy life worthwhile.

Now almost 83, Tommy still makes the 50-mile return trip every Thursday from his home to attend the club's dinner meetings in the city.

"I've attended about 45 meetings a year since joining the club in 1929," Tommy said, as he eased his short blocky frame from behind the steering wheel of his car. "At about 50 miles a round trip I guess I've driven almost 100,000 miles to keep up my attendance."

Mr. Cooper said he has served in every office of the Kiwanis club during his membership. "I've been through the ranks from ordinary Kiwanian to club president in 1941 and enjoyed every minute of the work. I still enjoy meeting the other members and the fellowship at the meetings."

The club named Tommy "Kiwanis-Man-of-the-Year" in 1959, in recognition of his long and distinguished record.

Born near Hespeler, Tommy and a twin brother were brought up by their grandparents' on a farm near Elmira. Following several years working on the farm the twins graduated in 1918 from the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph.

In 1920, Mr. Cooper became the provincial government's agricultural representative in Grey County, a post he held until retirement in 1959, after 39 years service.

Along with his agricultural duties, Tommy became drain-

age supervisor for a district covering eight counties of western Ontario. He was also assistant editor of Canadian Farm magazine.

But his official and semi-official chores did not prevent Mr. Cooper from becoming involved in community affairs especially where boys and girls were concerned. He played a vital role in improving rural fairs in the area with emphasis on the departments for young people.

From Mr. Cooper's interest in the younger generation evolved the first Grey County Music Festival at Meaford, and now sponsored by the Owen Sound Kiwanis Club. He was one of the original officials and retained his interest until recent years.

Although service club work claimed much of his time, Tommy still found hours to devote to his community. He was one of the "pushers" behind establishing the publicly-owned Centre Grey Hospital at Markdale and was secretary of the board for 16 years, from the hospital's founding in 1948 to 1964 when he quit after the capital debt was paid off. In addition, he has also been secretary-treasurer of the Markdale cemetery board for many years. He was an original member of the North Grey Conservation Authority.

Sandwiched between his community and service club work, Mr. Cooper also found time to become a member of the Masonic order more than 50 years ago. He is now a 32nd degree member and has advanced to the Rose Croix chapter of the fraternal organization.

Tommy Cooper's service to Grey County as an agricultural representative brought recognition several years ago with the establishment of an award bearing his name. Each year a committee selects the person in Grey whom it considers has contributed the most to agricultural advancement or community service work.

As for Mr. Cooper, he said, "The involvement with organizations and people has kept me younger than my years. I intend to sustain my interests, only on a lesser scale, so I'll probably be bucking the snow and slippery roads a few years yet to keep up my attendance in Kiwanis."

another term.

However, seven are running for three council seats. They are incumbent John H. Goodfellow and newcomers Gerry Cole, Eric Huston, Norman Savage, Lois Urstadt, Bill Wilder and Fred Workman.

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