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The Politics of Contested Space:
Military Property Development in Calgary, 1907-1938

by

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ABSTRACT

The recent sweep of Canadian Forces base closures across Canada has renewed public, political and media interest in decision-making about military properties. This thesis explores significant constraints and conflicting demands that influenced three military property development projects in Calgary between 1905 and 1938. The political interactions between various local and national players are integral to understanding the form and pace of military land use and property development. The process of acquiring lands for military training and infrastructure involves federal, provincial, municipal and local actors engaged in a contentious process that brings forth issues of core community values, perceived necessity versus grassroots interests, and the complexities of intergovernmental relations. The early histories of military properties in and about Calgary were not only shaped by strategic and military contexts, but also political and socio-economic influences.

Using a variety of perspectives and primary sources, this thesis illuminates a myriad of political, military, bureaucratic and social forces that shaped the acquisition and development of real properties for military use during the first half of the twentieth century. Three case studies have been examined, each concentrating on a particular perspective. Chapter 2 describes the bureaucratic indecisiveness and uncertainty, as well as the Aboriginal opposition, that inhibited the military's purchase of a portion of Sarcee Indian Reserve and delayed a long-term leasing arrangement at Camp Sarcee until 1921. Chapter 3 explores the local controversy surrounding the acquisition of Mewata Park for an armoury, focusing on the conflicting pressures that Calgary City Council faced in making decisions. Chapter 4 highlights R.B. Bennett's role in the construction of Currie Barracks during the Great Depression and the nature of opposition that confronted his plans.

This thesis concludes that community-military and community-political relations are crucial to understanding the historical development of military bases, training areas, and armouries. It is clear that Calgary was not always a "garrison town," nor did many of its citizens consider it a priority, or even desirous, to become one.

PREFACE

In mid-August 1998, disgruntled members of the Tsuu T'ina First Nation occupied the former military property known as "Sarcee" or "Harvey" Barracks on the south-west outskirts of Calgary. The "squatters" (as the occupants of the former military property came to be known in the press) had suffered from an acute housing shortage on the reserve. While some Band members claimed they were forced to live in teepees and tents, the former barracks and adjoining base housing units had sat vacant. Growing impatient with the slow clean-up process (detailed in the existing agreement with the military) and frustrated by the Tsuu T'ina Council's repeated assertions that the housing site might contain buried explosive or other contaminants and therefore could not be occupied, more than one hundred Tsuu T'ina residents took matters into their own hands. Without the consent of the military or the First Nation Council they moved into their new homes on land still leased by the federal government. The Council promptly told the families that they had to move out. The Tsuu T'ina tribal police also tried to stem the tide of occupants moving into the army homes, but these efforts proved futile. A stand-off loomed between the squatters, Tsuu T'ina Council, and the Department of National Defence (DND).

Defence officials in Ottawa found themselves in a quagmire. For decades, this property had been a source of anxiety to the DND and relations between themselves and the Tsuu T'ina had proven tumultuous. The former barracks and training facility was located on surrendered and unsurrendered portions of the Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) Reserve. Tensions between the DND, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC), and the Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) First Nation mounted in the early 1980s, when the military and Tsuu T'ina failed to reach a land use agreement and training activities ceased for a short time. In 1985, a new lease allowed the military use of 8,000 acres of land for twenty years.¹ In 1994, following more law suits and continuous disputes over access, the federal government decided to close Harvey Barracks (a facility constructed in 1957 on

¹ Bob Bergen, "CFB Calgary officer optimistic about future," Calgary Herald, 26 December 1981; Bob Bragg, "Sarcees want firing range lease talks reopened," Calgary Herald, 3 December 1984; Bruce Masterman, "Military takes aim at Sarcee site," Calgary Herald, 5 February 1985; Claudia Cattaneo, "Army firepower reduced as Sarcee site reopens," Calgary Herald, 29 October 1985.

purchased reserve land) and to stop training on Tsuu T'ina reserve lands. This was just one of many military facilities closed or downsized in one of the most dramatic rounds of infrastructure reduction in the history of the Canadian military. By 1997 the military withdrawal from Harvey Barracks was complete.

The decision to leave this property elicited mixed reactions from members of the First Nation and nearby Calgarians. Outstanding environmental concerns (contamination and unexploded ordnance) delayed the return of the property to the Tsuu T'ina, and some local interests criticized the federal government for continuing to pay millions of dollars for land no longer being used. Some Tsuu T'ina residents questioned where the Band Council was spending all of the money, and others chastized Chief Roy Whitney for inaction. One city businessman who had fought hard to keep CFB from closing "was madder than hell" that tax money was being paid to Tsuu T'ina negotiators to meet with military officials over the use of the land.²

This difficult history and contemporary climate of conflicting interests and pressures made the occupation of the former base by Tsuu T'ina members politically dangerous. Several salient considerations had to be balanced. A crackdown on the occupants would certainly provoke the indignation of Aboriginal peoples across the country. Nearly eighty percent of military facilities are on Aboriginal lands or count Aboriginal communities amongst their closest neighbours;³ therefore, a strain on Aboriginal-military relations could have broad repercussions. The worst case scenario for the military was a situation like that at the former Camp Ipperwash, a tragic story that generated tremendous press coverage. With the memory of Oka still fresh after less than a decade, and the military besieged by a hostile press lusting for controversial stories in the aftermath of the Somalia affair and a flood of sexual assault stories, defence officials knew that they had to proceed with caution. Certainly an "iron fist" approach would directly contradict the Liberal Government's "Aboriginal Action Plan" announced earlier that year. If, however, the DND was seen to acquiesce too quickly to the Aboriginal occupants, the military could face public scrutiny. The continued payment of lease

² Bob Bergen, "Tsuu T'ina negotiators paid to attend meetings," Calgary Herald, 9 March 1996; Bergen, "Tsuu T'ina councillor denies delaying CFB Calgary talks," Calgary Herald, 13 August 1997; Cameron Maxwell, "Housing Dispute Won by Natives," Calgary Sun, 22 August 1998.

monies to the Tsuu T'ina Council until cleanup was finished meant the department shared legal responsibility for the property. In addition, accusations that the government had a 'double standard' when it came to Aboriginal issues were not foreign to this particular case or many others. If lawless behaviour was condoned in this case, what broad message would the military be signalling?

For several days, tension and uncertainty reigned. On 19 August 1998, the DND ordered the occupants out of the former military buildings (now renamed "Black Bear Crossing") or threatened to take "appropriate action." The tenants refused to comply. At least one of the squatters stated that he would not move unless the army "put a gun to my head." In the end, however, such inflammatory rhetoric proved unnecessary. The military toned down its earlier position, and tabled an offer whereby the Tsuu T'ina Band members could stay in the occupied houses. Behind closed doors, federal officials, Chief Roy Whitney, and the First Nation Council reached an agreement on 21 August. The DND peacefully handed over the key to the former married quarters to the Tsuu T'ina ahead of schedule, while maintaining its environmental cleanup.⁴ Some journalists claimed the military had "surrendered," but defence officials appeared to accept the outcome with optimism. A violent stand-off had, after all, been averted.

Controversy and concern continues at the former Harvey Barracks. As late as the summer of 1999, with the population of individuals living on the former military property burgeoning (the majority of whom are squatters from outside the reserve), landowners on adjacent land have expressed concern about increased unlawful behaviour spilling over from the reserve. The Tsuu T'ina First Nation continue to search for a better way of preserving peace on the former military base and salvaging relations with their new neighbours.⁵

³ "Environmentally Sustainable Defence Activities: A Sustainable Development Strategy for National Defence," December 1997, http://www.dnd.ca/admie/dge/sds/sds1_e.htm, 4.

⁴ Mark Lowey, "Natives take over army homes," *Calgary Herald*, 18 August 1998; Lowey, "Natives ordered out of army homes," *Calgary Herald*, 19 August 1998; Ian Wilson, "Staying Power," *Calgary Sun*, 19 August 1998; Lowey and Juliet Williams, "Ottawa moves to end standoff," *Calgary Herald*, 20 August 1998; Cameron Maxwell, "Truce on the Horizon," *Calgary Sun*, 20 August 1998; Maxwell, "Natives Question Cleanup Early Handover in Jeopardy," *Calgary Sun*, 21 August 1998; Lowey, "Keys to army base houses turned over to Tsuu T'ina," *Calgary Herald*, 22 August 1998; Nova Pierson, "Base Handover Now Complete," *Calgary Sun*, 25 August 1998.

⁵ Brock Ketcham, "Funds found for native police to patrol former military base," *Calgary Herald*, 11 June 1999; Ketcham, "Squatters' behaviour rattles Lakeview," *Calgary Herald*, 12 June 1999.

* * * * *

The dark, overcast sky wept on Calgary, 21 June 1997. For onlookers at 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry's "Sunset Ceremony," the solemn, rainy weather was a fitting parallel to the sadness in their hearts. Their own tears blended with the water from above as the troops gathered to say their final goodbye to the city. The PPCLI had called Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Calgary home for decades. It had been a source of pride to the community through the Korean War and countless peacekeeping missions. Soldiers from the regiment, who were amongst Canada's most distinguished of this century, had occupied both Sarcee/Harvey Barracks and the Currie Barracks property just north-east of the former. Now, as part of the ongoing reorganization of Land Forces Command, the unit and Headquarters 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group were being consolidated with other brigade units at "Garrison Edmonton," the new superbase to the north. The reserve units and a few regular force personnel who would remain to see the closure through 1998 represented only a shadow of what Calgary's proud military had once been.⁶

The closure of Currie Barracks provoked controversies different from those associated with the Tsuu T'ina lands. With the fate of the Sarcee Training Area and Harvey Barracks sealed in 1994, the federal government announced in its budget the following year that the remainder of CFB Calgary would be closed. Local politicians, citizens and journalists expressed a mix of lament and outrage. Critics denounced the entire decision to close the base and move it to Edmonton as a purely political act aimed at punishing Calgarians for not electing Liberal MPs to Ottawa. They accused the federal government of citing purportedly dubious accounting figures related to the closure and transfer and wasting public funds for petty political purposes. In their eyes, the move was a travesty.

The divestiture of the former Currie property has been a tenuous undertaking. A myriad of local interests have voiced conflicting demands for reuse now that the military has departed. Portions of the former CFB Calgary were transferred to the Canada Lands Company (CLC) for management, planning and redevelopment. Business plans

⁶ On the ceremony and departure of 1 PPCLI, see "The Last March," Calgary Sun, 25 August 1997, souvenir section.

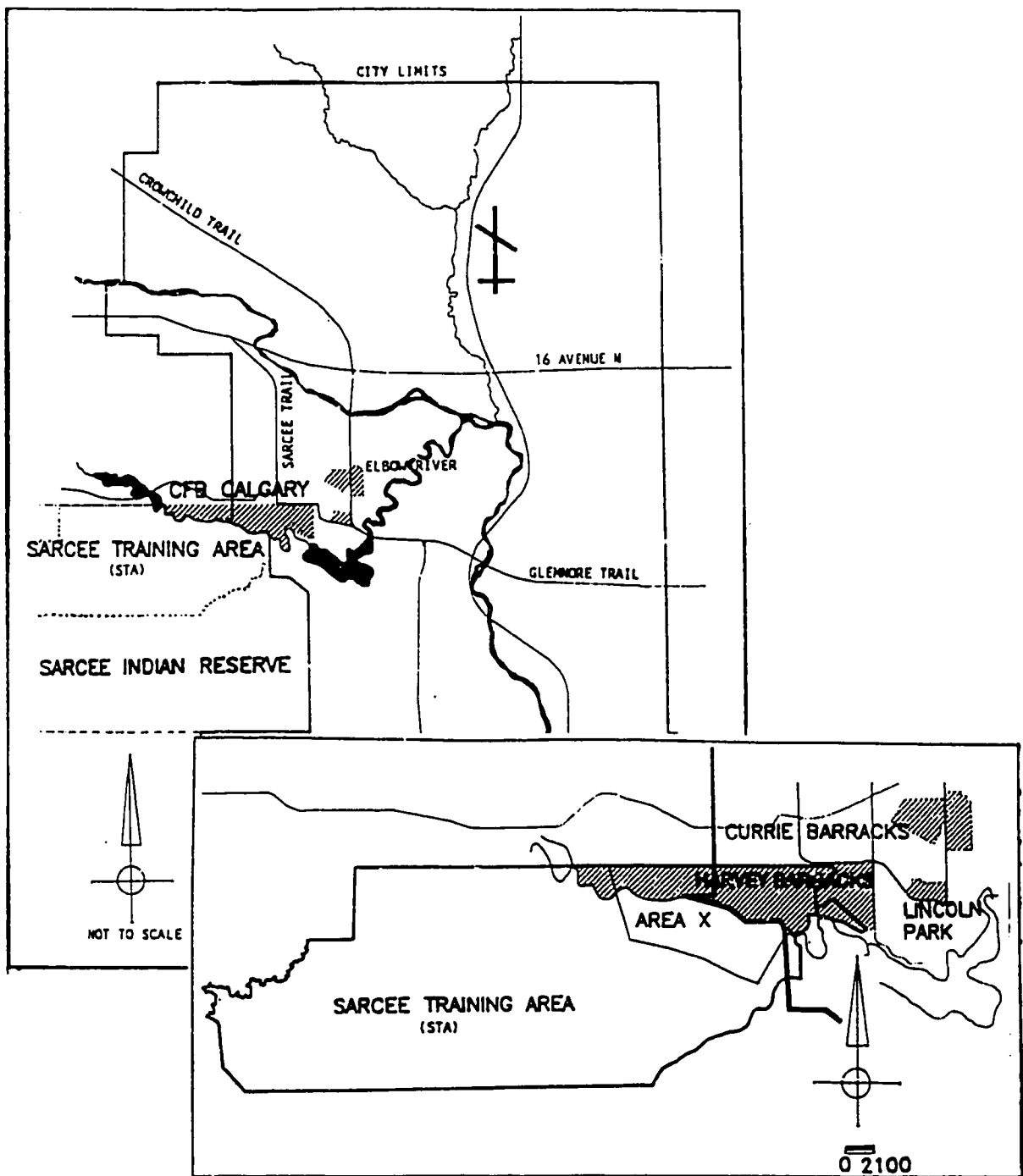
were developed for commercial use, proposals were offered for the development of low-cost housing, schools, even a minimum security prison, and rumours suggested the land might be provided as compensation for Aboriginal land claims. Public meetings brought forth mixed reactions to plans for the former Currie Barracks. Local politicians, municipal and provincial, lambasted the federal government for failing "to develop the site in a way that will benefit the city," precipitating what some city officials have called "the largest planning issue in the city's history."⁷ Accusations of patronage were levelled at politicians over dealings with friends in business and the appointment of representatives to deal with the land dispersal. Calgary Currie MLA Jocelyn Burgener was a consummate critic of Chrétien's Liberals, arguing (amongst other things) that the federal government had treated Calgary differently from other city's facing military closures by not donating a part of the lands to the people for a post-secondary institution. Topics such as the value of the physical land and infrastructure, who would get the spoils from subsequent development projects, and the economic impact of the closure on the local community, were hotly debated.⁸ The issues surrounding the former military property are replete with political and social controversy.

There is more than a bit of irony that Calgarians are crying foul at the closure of CFB on partisan political grounds, for the development of Calgary's military properties has always been politically charged. The acquisition and development of Calgary properties for military use is a long story of tremendous political intrigue, of a precarious public laboriously debating the pros and cons of a military presence. Returning to the past and examining the origins of Camp Sarcee, Mewata Armoury and Currie Barracks, a similar picture emerges. It is clear that Calgary was not always a "garrison town," nor did many of its citizens consider it a priority or even desirous to become one.

⁷ Bob Bergen, "MLA, Alderman slam feds," Calgary Herald, 30 Oct 1997; "Former Military Homes: Base flyer wars erupt," Calgary Herald, 8 Dec 1997. See also David Trigueiro, "CFB Land Dispersal: Native historians say Blood claim has merit," Calgary Herald, 13 Sept 1997; Mario Toneguzzi, "CFB Calgary: Plan for Currie draws mixed reaction," Calgary Herald, 18 Feb 1998; Valerie Berenyi, "West Side Story," Avenue (June 1998), 25-29; Berenyi, "The Missing Piece," Avenue (April 1998), 32-38.

⁸ Don Braid, "Who'll get the shaft from Currie gold mine?," Calgary Herald, 13 Sept 1997; Steve Chase, "Decore assists CFB sale," Calgary Sun, 13 Mar 1996, and his "Probe vowed for Decore's CFB dealings," 14 March 1996; Bob Bergen and Ashley Geddes, "Armed Forces Base: Klein's pal wins land-dispersal plum," Calgary Herald, 16 Mar 1996; Bergen, "Confusion irks panel on CFB Calgary," Calgary Herald, 19 January 1997; "Moving the troops: Critics dispute Ottawa's explanations for closing CFB Calgary," Calgary Herald, 1 Sept 1996.

Figure 1: Map of Canadian Forces Base Calgary, c. 1993⁹



⁹ Stephen Gasser, "Strategic Options for Resolving Operational and Community Environment Issues at Canadian Forces Base Calgary" (Master's Degree Project, University of Calgary, 1991), 4, 16.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD&S	Assistant Deputy & Secretary
BoC	Board of Commissioners
CCA	City of Calgary Archives
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CMR	Canadian Mounted Rifles
DEO	District Engineering Officer
DES	Director Engineering Services
DGES	Director General Engineering Services, Ottawa
DGPU	Director General Property and Utilities, National Defence
DIA	Department of Indian Affairs
DM	Deputy Minister
DMD	Department of Militia and Defence
DND	Department of National Defence
DOC	District Officer Commanding
DPW	Department of Public Works
DSCR	Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment
DSGIA	Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs
GOC	General Officer Commanding
ILR	Indian Lands Registry
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
I.R.	Indian Reserve
LTB	Lands and Timber Branch, Indian Affairs
MD 13	Military District Number 13
MGO	Master General of the Ordnance
MMD	Minister of Militia and Defence
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
PAA	Province of Alberta Archives
PARC	Public Archives Record Centre
Pt.	Part
PWCA	Public Work Construction Act
RG	Record Group
Secy	Secretary
Vol.	Volume

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Calgary has been known by several names over the last century: "Sandstone City," "Cowtown," and "Garrison Town" were three of the most pervasive. The last was a tribute to the city's close ties to the military through Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Calgary and the various other permanent and temporary military facilities to which Calgary has been home. The twentieth century was barely a year old when the Government of Canada authorized the organization of three squadrons of militia cavalry in the District of Alberta, and in the first decades the number of units in Calgary grew rapidly. The militia units were without a reliable training facility until World War One, when Camp Sarcee was created southwest of the city. This property was expanded in the 1950s when the military acquired municipal and Sarcee Reserve lands and developed Sarcee Barracks (renamed Harvey Barracks in 1981). They continued to lease reserve lands known as the Sarcee Training Area (STA). Calgary was without a suitable drill hall until 1917, when construction of the Mewata Armoury was completed. In the 1930s, Calgary's military infrastructure expanded when Currie Barracks was built west of 24th Street, northwest of the Sarcee Camp. Harvey and Currie Barracks were joined in 1968 to form Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Calgary and, according to some journalists, became a critical part of Calgary's socio-economic fabric.¹ When used in the last fifty years, the name "garrison town" carried pleasant connotations. The symbiotic civil-military relationship that the city enjoyed (if the press is to be believed), was marred only by occasionally tenuous negotiations between DND and the Tsuu T'ina First Nation over training lands to the southwest.

In response to the closure of CFB Calgary and the relocation of most of the city's former soldiers to Edmonton, journalists have paid solemn tribute to the atrophy of Calgary's military connection. They recall a "golden age" of Calgary's military presence, when the city was the "Home of the Army of the West." Past civil-military relations in

¹ See, for example, Tom Keyser, "Bug-out a threat to city's lifeblood," Calgary Herald, May 199[?], Glenbow Library, Clipping file, "Military Bases."

the city are painted in utopian hues to serve the recent mourning process. In a teleological sweep, Calgary's military presence is shown to grow in a 'natural' course of events, embodying a symbiotic relationship marked by mutual tolerance and amity. For example, retired Colonel Ian Gray, base commander at Calgary from 1991 to 1994, lamented the closing of a base that "has been part of Calgary virtually throughout the city's whole development ... Calgary and the base have grown up together." This reflection prompted one journalist to claim "Indeed, Calgary opened its arms to the military from the very beginning."² Another concluded that "Currie Barracks was a massive public works project built in the '30s and gratefully received by Calgarians."³ While comments like these are conducive to the construction and perpetuation of local myths, they are not reflective of past realities.

The military's destiny in Calgary was much more arduous and politically onerous than recent literature suggests. The current climate of multifarious pressures and conflicting demands is rich in historical antecedent. Early negotiations between the military and Indian Affairs authorities over the use of Sarcee Reserve lands were marked by uncertainty and failed plans. The military's acquisition of the site for the Mewata Armoury provoked a bitter civic debate that preyed upon partisan allegiances and delayed construction for years. Currie Barracks was built during the Great Depression in the midst of political and local controversy flavoured by the socio-economic and political exigencies of the day. Issues of patronage, community impact, grassroots opposition, and local business involvement contributed to a vehement and prolonged debate on the development of the military property in Calgary which involved federal and local politicians, local interest groups, and military officials. In the past, as at present, the history of Calgary's military presence was not only shaped by strategic-military contexts, but by political and socio-economic influences as well.

² Leif Sollid, "Budget folds 'canvas city,' Calgary Sun, 28 February 1995, 23. This journalist also noted that the closures "also marks the end of a rich tradition dating back to 1913, when the Department of National Defence erected a tent city on the northeast corner of the Sarcee Indian Reserve to train troops for the First World War...In 1913, the Sarcee Military Camp ... accommodated as many as 10,000 troops preparing for duty in Europe." As Chapter 2 chronicles, Sarcee Camp was not erected until 1915, not 1913.

³ Valerie Berenyi, "West Side Story: The Politics of CFB Calgary West," Avenue (June 1998), 30-32.

Using a multidimensional lens, this thesis explores significant constraints and conflicting demands that influenced three military property development projects in Calgary between 1905 and 1938. While current explorations of civil-military relations focus on the 'national' or 'federal' level, this neglects much of the story. The interactions between local and national players at various levels are integral to understanding the form and pace of military land use and property development. The process of acquiring lands for military training and building infrastructure involves federal, provincial, municipal and local actors engaged in a contentious process that brings forth issues of core community values, perceived necessity versus grassroots interests, and the complexities of intergovernmental relations. The early histories of military properties in and about Calgary were not only shaped by strategic and military contexts, but by political and socio-economic influences as well. This thesis argues that community-military and community-political relations are crucial to understanding the historical development of Canadian Forces Bases, training areas, and armouries.

Although military property and infrastructure development in Canada has been an important issue for military authorities and politicians since Confederation, the subject has largely evaded the critical gaze of professional historians. Civil-military relations at the national level have been well explored by historians such as James Eayrs and Desmond Morton, yet scant attention has been devoted to assessing military, political and community interaction outside of Ottawa. There is little scholarly material on military matters at the local or regional level beyond the realm of regimental histories which place a premium on changes in command and wartime exploits overseas, or social histories that look at the impact of specific wars on society.

Military training areas and buildings are domestic milieus where citizens and members of the military interact; they are also properties and institutions which have been the subject of intense, often acrimonious, debates. Although the nature of these altercations would seem to beckon historical study, Ronald Haycock concluded in an insightful article on Camp Borden that the stories of such specialized institutions as military facilities are often ignored: "some professional historians seemingly consider camp histories either too dull or too unimportant; and amateurs have concentrated on

drama rather than analysis and description."⁴ Haycock described how the development of Camp Borden was a product "of times and people," involving individuals of federal and local prominence in an intense and prolonged controversy. He concluded that "the camp's birth was influenced more by the interplay of political and social interests than any military need for a camp."⁵ Haycock's relatively brief exploration of military property acquisition and development focused largely on the roles and impressions left by high-ranking national political and military officials, and raised the need for further study of this neglected area of Canadian history.

Other historians have suggested additional directions for research on military property development. Studies of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan have revealed how municipal governments appealed to the federal government to bring the plan to their communities (town councils passed resolutions and sent civic delegations to Ottawa) and the significant impacts the construction and presence of training centres had on these communities.⁶ In addition, histories of the Department of Public Works and federal architecture have touched on the construction and administration of military building projects and revealed bureaucratic squabbling over jurisdiction and control.⁷ The complex array of political, social and military issues suggested in the small amount of existing literature, coupled with the military's recent decision to divest or downsize many of its property holdings, reveals the relevance and timeliness of assessing the history of Canadian military property development from a multidimensional perspective.

⁴ Ronald G. Haycock, "Of Times and People: The Early History of Camp Borden, 1905-1916," Ontario History LXXXIII, 4 (December 1991), 253. His article was largely a rebuttal to W.E. Chajkowsky's interpretation of events in The History of Camp Borden, 1916-1918: Land of Sand, Sin and Sorrow (Jordan Station: Station Press, 1983).

⁵ Haycock, "Of Times and People," 271.

⁶ The most relevant of these studies include: Brereton Greenhous and Norman Hillmer, "The Impact of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan on Western Canada: Some Saskatchewan Case Studies," Revue d'études canadiennes/Journal of Canadian Studies 16/3&4 (Automne-Hiver 1981 Fall-Winter), 133-144; James N. Williams, The Plan (Stittsville, ON: Canada's Wings, 1984); F.J. Hatch, Aerodrome of Democracy (Ottawa: DND, Directorate of History); and W.A.B. Douglas, The Creation of a National Air Force (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

⁷ See Margaret Archibald, By Federal Design: The Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works, 1881-1914 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1983) and Janet Wright, Crown Assets: The Architecture of the Department of Public Works, 1867-1967 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

The ideas presented in existing literature set out a spectrum of possibilities for exploring, assessing and explaining military property development. Given the large cast of characters that can be involved in planning and development, a multifaceted lens is needed to take into the account the broad range of influences on and responses to military development schemes. Political, military-strategic, and socio-economic contexts are crucial to understanding the perceived need, design and scope of the projects. Furthermore, the concepts of power outlined by Gilbert Stelter⁸ are useful in understanding how political and local stakeholders influence decision-making and shape the course of development. The sources of power available to federal departments and governments, politicians, and interest groups depend upon the particulars of each situation. Similarly, the instruments of power used by the various stakeholders vary over time and in different contexts. Taken together, the complex web of government bodies, interest groups, and individuals that have interests in development plans presents a bewildering array of competing interests and conflicting demands. To arrive at anything more than a general, cursory description and basic act of chronology requires an in-depth examination of several processes and a careful delimitation of the study.

Military property and infrastructure development in and about Calgary provides a timely and useful subject for historical analysis. The base closure and concomitant loss of military units have made military and political decision-making regarding property management an issue of local interest. The historical presence of the military on Tsuu T'ina lands has been likened to "rape" and has been the subject of intense discussions between the federal government and the First Nation.⁹ Former military lands in the city have been scrutinized for their heritage value, drawing attention to the origins of the properties. In addition, the Museum of the Regiments is currently finishing a gallery on the history of Calgary's military heritage with an official opening planned for the fall of 1999. Despite this current interest, there is little sustained academic research available on

⁸ See Gilbert Stelter, "Power and Place in Urban History" in Power and Place: Canadian Urban Development in the North American Context, Eds. Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 1-2. Stelter's brief overview of theory will be treated more thoroughly in the conclusion.

⁹ Bob Bergen, "Chief wants to deal with Ottawa on 'raped land,'" Calgary Herald, 14 August 1997.

the city's military properties from an historical perspective. A few studies of Calgary's military heritage have appeared over the years but tremendous gaps remain where property acquisition and development are concerned. In Richard Cunniffe's anecdotal study of Calgary's military heritage,¹⁰ for example, military facilities appear on the scene just in time to greet the arrival of a particular regiment or training season; he does not explain the controversial planning involved in the land acquisition and construction processes. Recent research reports on Currie Barracks¹¹ are more useful in placing that particular development scheme in its historical context and provide an abundance of detail on specific buildings, but leave much room for historical interpretation and analysis, as well as the integration of additional source material. These studies provide a basic chronological foundation on which to build the more detailed examination required if military property development is to be understood in its broader political and socio-economic contexts. Documentary evidence on the early origins of military properties in Calgary is abundant and accessible at the local and national level, facilitating the pursuit of a more critical historical examination.

This thesis is comprised of three case studies¹², each concentrating on a particular perspective. First, the early negotiations for the use of portions of the Sarcee (Tsuu T'ina) Indian Reserve as a military camp and training grounds are assessed with an emphasis on the perspective of the federal government. This case study shows how different federal departments had converging agendas and priorities that resulted in prolonged negotiations and re-negotiations, and explained why the leasing arrangements took the form that they did. Second, the controversial origins of Mewata Armoury are explored with an emphasis on the municipal government's perspective and the conflicting pressures it faced from Ottawa and from the local community. This case study in land acquisition provides important insight into the impact of government jurisdiction in

¹⁰ Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki: The Military in Calgary (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975).

¹¹ Harry Saunders, "Currie Barracks: Background History"; Katherine Spencer-Ross, Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) Building Report 91-126, "Currie Barracks," City of Calgary, Planning and Building Department.

¹² For a justification of the case study approach when investigators desire to: (a) define topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) cover contextual conditions and not just the phenomenon of the study, and (c) rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence, see R.K. Yin, Case Study Research: Designs and Methods, rev. ed. (London: Sage, 1989) and Applications of Case Study Research (London: Sage, 1993).

federal development projects, and the ways in which partisan political interests become manifest in local development schemes. Third, the development of Currie Barracks during the 1930s is examined highlighting Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's perspective and his interactions with the municipal government, his constituents, and interest groups in Ottawa and Calgary. This case study explores the multilateral pressures facing a federal politician, the influence of powerful political leaders on local decision-making, and the instruments used to exercise federal power in a community.

The current study concentrates on the period between the establishment of Calgary as headquarters of Military District No. 13 (MD 13) and the beginning of the Second World War. There are several advantages to studying the first half of the twentieth century rather than the postwar period. First, in the context of Calgary there is a continuity in terms of local military administration structure. It was not until 1947 that MD 13 was abolished and Headquarters Calgary Garrison was formed. Second, existing historiography provides background on some of the general themes and figures involved in the military projects during this period. The character and views of individuals like Chula (Bull Head), William Markle, Sam Hughes, R.B. Bennett, Andrew McNaughton, Roberta McAdams, and Emily Spencer Kirby, have been sketched by historians. Furthermore, Calgary's development before World War II has been more thoroughly studied by historians than the period after. This secondary material provides a broader context for discussion and analysis than the more limited resources that exist for the postwar period. Third, an approach involving various perspectives required a range of source material. The paltry amount of secondary material directly related to military (and, in broader terms, federal) property development, especially in Calgary, meant that most of the evidence for this research was found in primary sources. Access to archival material on Aboriginal-military relations for the post-1945 period is difficult, especially in the current climate of land claims and on-going negotiations over the return or divestiture of properties no longer used by the military.¹³ Little archival material on the development of Harvey Barracks in 1950s, for example, can be accessed through the National Archives or

¹³ On current Aboriginal-military issues, see P.W. Lackenbauer, "Aboriginal Claims and the Canadian Military: The Impact on Domestic Strategy and Operations," Electronic publication (Ottawa: Conference of Defence Associations Institute, Spring 1999), <http://www.cda-cdai.ca/symposia/1998/98lackenbauer.htm>.

any other central repository. While postwar developments and decisions would benefit from a similar depth of analysis, time and space constrained the integration of such research into the current study. Fourth, the creation of Currie Barracks was believed at the time to confirm once and for all that Calgary would be the home of the military in Western Canada. All three case studies explore an earlier era when the military's fate in Calgary was still uncertain.

Maurice Mandelbaum suggested that an action does not properly become subject matter for historical study unless it has "societal significance."¹⁴ Recent events make the subject of this thesis timely and significant. Calgary journalist Valerie Berenyi noted that the history of the former military property now known as CFB Calgary West is relevant "because politics and history set the stage as city planners, Calgarians and government struggle to determine what should replace the military ... now that the base closure is nearly complete."¹⁵ The history component is still unclear. While recent journalistic rhetoric would suggest that the military and Calgary shared a persistently amicable, symbiotic relationship that was only recently breached through federal political malfeasance, the military's presence in the city was political from the onset. As these three case studies demonstrate, controversy and uncertainty accompanied military proposals to acquire properties and build facilities in Calgary. This thesis illustrates how the study of military property development demands exploration beyond the narrow confines of 'traditional' military history. It is social, political, economic, even business history, a story of civil-military and community-military relations, of shifting identities, and of planning and development.

Alderman Barry Erskine is one of many Calgarians who have expressed the need to preserve the history of CFB Calgary now that the base is closed.¹⁶ If recent journalist depictions of the past are any indication of the community's collective memory of the origins of Calgary's military facilities, the distant origins of CFB Calgary do not only need to be preserved, but rediscovered.

¹⁴ The Problem of Historical Knowledge, 9, 14, quoted in William H. Dray, Philosophy of History, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 8.

¹⁵ "West Side Story: The Politics of CFB Calgary West," Avenue (June 1998), 30-32.

¹⁶ Vickie Megrath, "Alderman Wants Base History Preserved," Calgary Sun, 17 April 1998.

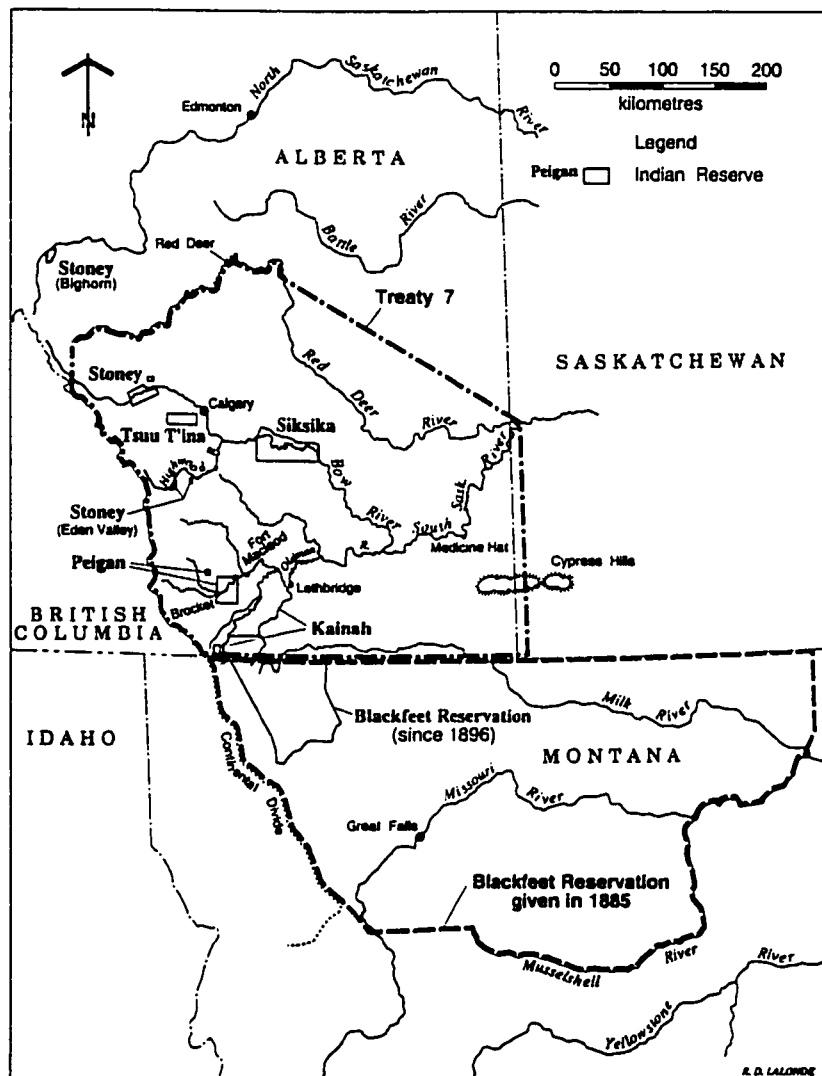
CHAPTER TWO

INTERDEPARTMENTAL UNCERTAINTY: NEGOTIATING FOR MILITIA TRAINING ON THE SARCEE RESERVE, 1908-21

Long before Europeans settled on the shores of Turtle Island (North America), this continent was Aboriginal land. The land now known as the Canadian Prairies has been a source of physical and spiritual sustenance for indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The nomadic Tsuu T'ina, or Sarcee as they were commonly known in the late nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, were one such people. The Sarcee split from the Beaver Indians of northern Alberta long before the arrival of the first fur traders in the late eighteenth century, and during the nineteenth century were closely associated with the Blackfoot tribes (especially the Bloods), forming part of the Blackfoot Confederacy [see figure 2]. Contact with easterners had profound consequences on the tribe and its traditional way of life. The number of Sarcee fluctuated after contact with the Europeans (largely due to tuberculosis and “apathy” according to anthropologist Diamond Jenness), plummeting to below one hundred in the 1860s. The dramatic decline in numbers during the late twentieth century had dramatic short-term and long-term repercussions, and Jenness indicated as late as the 1930s that the tribe faced cultural extinction. The disappearance of the buffalo destroyed their traditional means of sustenance, and by 1880 the Sarcee were left largely dependent upon government rations of beef and flour.¹

¹ Anthropologists date the split from the Beaver to sometime during the seventeenth century, while the Sarcee themselves have a number of explanations. Rev. E.F. Wilson, Report on the Sarcee Indians (London?: s.n., 1888?), 10-11; Hugh Dempsey, “The Sarcee Indians,” Glenbow 4/5 (September-October 1971), 3-8; Diamond Jenness, The Sarcee Indians of Alberta (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1938) and The Indians of Canada, 7th ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 324-6; F.W. Hodge, ed., Handbook of Indians of Canada (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1913). Reverend Wilson reported that Bull Head and the other members of the tribe called themselves “Soténā” and “Tinnātte,” seemingly connecting them with the “Tinne” or Athabaskan nation. Members of the tribe were called “Sarcee” or “Sarxi” by the Blackfoot. Wilson also claimed that they were “divided into two bands – the Blood Sarcees and the Real Sarcees,” although this distinction is unclear. F.W. Hodge reported that “Sarcee” came from the Blackfoot words “sa-arsi,” meaning “no good,” but Hugh Dempsey disagreed. Dempsey reported that the name “tso-tii’na,” meaning “earth people,” refers to the great numbers of the tribe that used to live on the Prairies, “as plentiful as grains of earth or sand.” To preserve historical context based on the archival documentation consulted for this chapter, the names “Sarcee Indians” and “Sarcee Band” are used in this paper.

Figure 2: Map of Treaty Seven and Traditional Blackfoot Territory²



² Map, Area of Treaty 7 and Traditional Territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council, et al., *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), xvii.

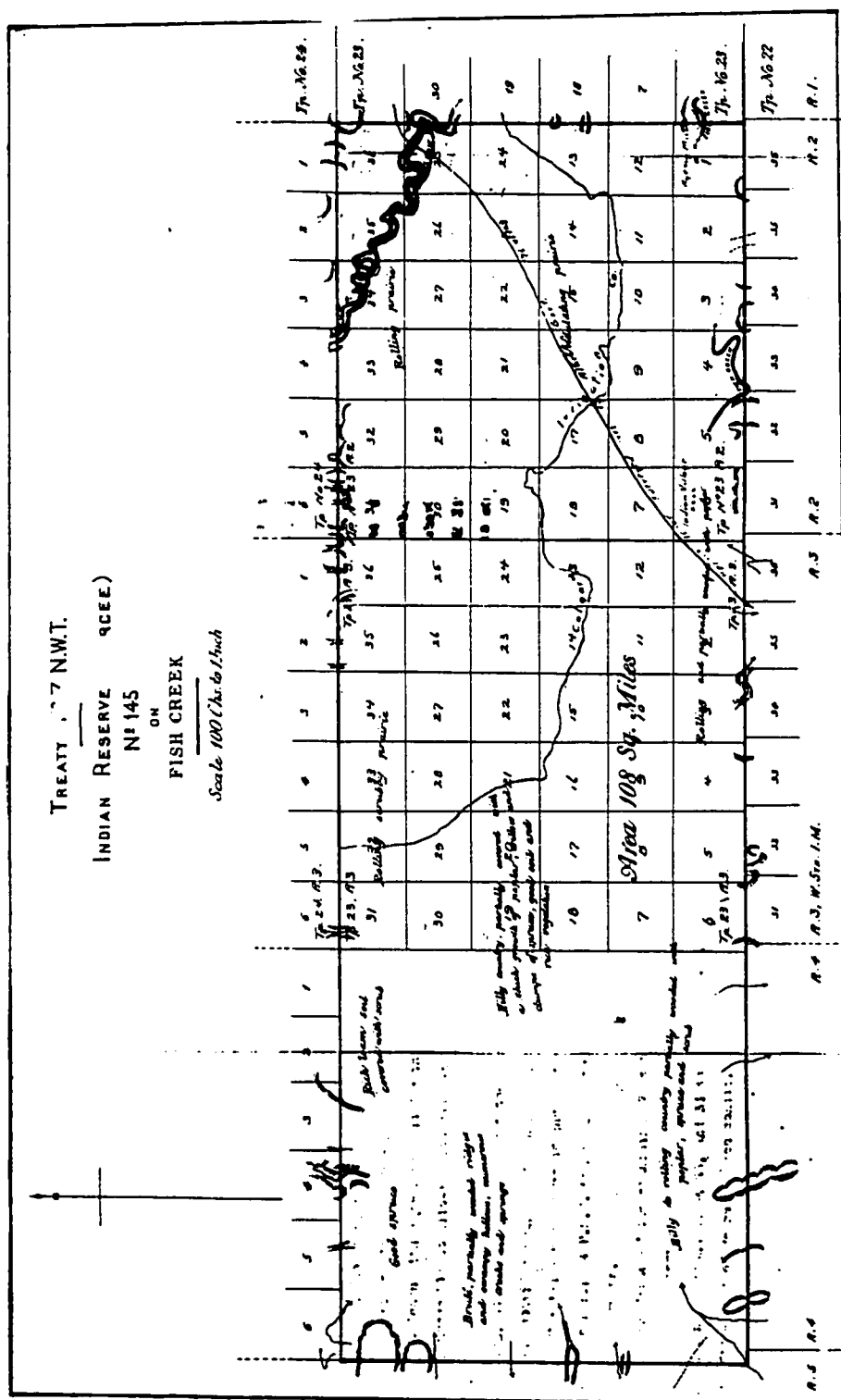
In 1877, the Indians of southern Alberta assembled at Blackfoot Crossing to negotiate a treaty with the Canadian Government. Bull Head (Chula, or Little Chief, to his people and also known as Stamixo'tokan), a great warrior with a commanding presence and personality, reluctantly accepted the terms of Treaty Seven on behalf of his 255 followers. On the suggestion of Crowfoot, the main Chief of the Blackfoot, Bull Head agreed to share a reserve with the Blackfoot and Blood near Blackfoot Crossing. The end of their nomadic lifestyle and the confinement to the shared reserve led to a marked deterioration in relations with the other bands on the reserve. "After skilful diplomatic manoeuvring," Hugh Dempsey explained, the government acquiesced to Bull Head's demands for a separate reserve on traditional Sarcee hunting grounds near Fort Calgary:

Accordingly, on June 27th, 1883, a new treaty was made with the Sarcee giving them Township 23 in Ranges 2, 3 and 4, west of the 5th meridian "to have and to hold the same unto the use of the said Sarcee Indians forever." This area consisted of 108 square miles, ranging from prairies on the east to deer hunting bushlands to the west [See figure 3]. By the end of their first year, ... they had built 33 houses to replace their tattered lodges and in the following year they planted their first crops.³

With the new reserve came a separate Indian Agent to administer Sarcee affairs. The agent was only a letter away from contact with influential bureaucrats in Ottawa, and as local administrator was armed with all the powers and controls of the *Indian Act* at his disposal.

Military and quasi-military authority was a central component of Calgary's Euro-Canadian development from the onset. The North West Mounted Police (NWMP) built Fort Calgary at the junction of the Bow and Elbow Rivers in 1875. With the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, the Canadian West was plunged into turmoil. The rebellion exposed the vulnerability of the Government's hold on its vast prairie expanse. The government was initially apprehensive that the Sarcee might join Louis Riel's forces. Despite Bull

³ Bull Head was hereditary chief of the tribe, succeeding his elder brother when the latter was killed by the Cree in 1865 and taking his brother's name. The Chief was described as a "tall, powerful man," over six foot two in his old age with a "loud booming voice." Hugh Dempsey, "Chula," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* XIV (Toronto: UTP, 1998), 213-4; Wilson, *Report on the Sarcee Indians*, 10. "Indian Reserve Survey Report," Canada, Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), *Annual Report* (Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1882), 220. For information on Sarcee demography after 1880 through the period covered in this chapter, see Michael Lee McIntyre, "Sarcee Demography, 1880-1925," M.A. thesis (University of Calgary, 1975).



⁴ Map, Treaty No.7 N.W.T. Indian Reserve (Sarcee) No. 145 on Fish Creek, 1882, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Public Archives Records Centre (PARC), File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

Head's "fractious" nature and apparent disdain for Canadian officials, the Chief wore the medal he was given at the signing of Treaty Seven and declared that he wished to maintain peace. The Sarcee remained loyal to the Crown. In the aftermath of the rebellion, the face of the West changed forever. Settlers swept to the Northwest Territories around the turn of the century and the Federal Government consolidated its authority, dedicated to ensuring that "peace, order and good government" would be the hallmarks of the Prairies. The population of Calgary grew from 500 in 1884 to more than 4000 the following decade. Small militia units began to organize in the community.⁵

The turn of the century brought with it dramatic growth for Calgary as a military centre. The Boer War generated nationalist pride in Canada's fledgling military, and the century was barely a year old when the Government of Canada authorized the organization of three squadrons of militia cavalry in the District of Alberta. "G" squadron, Canadian Mounted Rifles (CMR), was based in the Calgary, providing the city with a constant military presence. Although Calgary was not selected to be the provincial capital for the newly created Province of Alberta in 1905, nor the home of the provincial university, it was conferred major military responsibility when the militia was reorganized in 1907. Alberta and the district of Mackenzie were organized as Military District No. 13 (MD 13) headquartered in Calgary (the western units were previously administered out of MD 10 in Winnipeg). By 1908 the militia organization in Calgary had grown to include the following units: the 15th Light Horse (Calgary), the 19th Alberta Mounted Rifles (Edmonton), the 21st Alberta Hussars (Medicine Hat), the 23rd Alberta Rangers (Fort Macleod), the 25th Battery, Canadian Field Artillery (Lethbridge), and the 101st Edmonton Fusiliers. That year the first service unit, the 17th Cavalry Field Ambulance, was formed in Calgary. Over the next two years two more service units were organized (No. 13 Detachment, Canadian Ordnance Corps and No. 14 Company, Canadian Army Service Corps).⁶ In short, there was a sizeable military presence in the city, one that was growing with each year.

⁵ Dempsey attributed Bull Head's "so-called obstinacy" to the chief's dedication to and spirited defence of his people. Dempsey, "Chula," 213-14.

⁶ Jack Dunn, The Alberta Field Force of 1885 (Calgary: Jack Dunn, 1994); Dick Cuncliffe, Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki: The Military in Calgary (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975).

Annual training at the district level was seen to be crucial to the transformation of the militia into a viable, self-contained citizen army. The week or so of annual summer militia camp was the one time during the year that large groups of citizens could be taught how to behave like soldiers under conditions that somewhat resembled those of an actual battlefield. Militia officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) who received special training by the Permanent Force at the large central camp at Petawawa would return to their districts to take charge of instruction at district camps. There they would teach musketry, lecture on tactics, and direct tactical schemes during manoeuvres. Soldiers completed regimental drill, and depending on their unit, might attend medical or ordnance lectures, signalling training, or practice “bombing” or field engineering. Military officials recognized that firing ranges, instructional buildings and extensive manoeuvre areas for tactical exercises were crucial to effective militia training. In Calgary, however, there was no permanent training area. In 1903, the members of “G” squadron, CMR, attended their first summer camp on the James Walker Estate in east Calgary. The following year the soldiers went under canvas at the Calgary Exhibition grounds, in 1905 the CMR summer camp was held at Victoria Park, and afterwards the camp moved back and forth between these locations and E.G. May’s ranch at Springbank.⁷

In July 1908, the District Commanding Officer (DOC) of MD 13, Colonel S.B. Steele, began to lobby the Department of Militia and Defence (DMD) to take immediate steps to secure a permanent training ground for the future use of units in the District. He envisioned that the ideal site would comprise “a stretch of country ... convenient to existing or proposed railway lines, and diversified by forest, hill, mountain &c. and to contain good water and grass, wood, and a long perfectly clear Artillery Range, with healthful location.” Steele felt that the timing was critical:

The moment appears opportune for the acquirement of such a property, as the province is filling up so rapidly that in a few years’ time it will be difficult to obtain a convenient location of the required area, except at

⁷ G.F.G. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers, 1604-1954* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1954), 295-6; Commandant’s Report on 1911 Camp of Instruction, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 357, File HQ 33-24-40; Weekly Report on Mobilization Camp, Calgary, Week ending July 29th, 1916, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 359, File HQ 33-24-117 vol. 1.

great expense. In this respect I would point out that the Indian Reserves contain a lot of suitable country, the Sarcee Reserve for instance.⁸

Steele's appeal struck a resonant chord in Ottawa. Brigadier General William Otter, the Chief of the General Staff, urged the "importance of acquiring in the North-West a tract of land for field-training, gun-practice and horse-breeding." He realized that the militia was expanding in the west and that "the want of a manoeuvre area is already beginning to be felt." Otter informed the Deputy Minister that other officials had made appeals to him prior to Steele. The Master General of the Ordnance had advised that an artillery range be established in Alberta, and the Accountant and Paymaster General assured him that this would be sound financial policy. Sooner or later a site would have to be acquired. "As is evident from Steele's letter," the CGS agreed, "there is no time to be lost."⁹

The Militia wasted little time acting in this direction. That fall, the Department wrote to Frank Perley, the Deputy Superintendent General at Indian Affairs (DSGIA), and informed him of their plans for a large area of land in the central part of Alberta. The Deputy Minister of the Interior was aware that Steele recommended the Sarcee Indian Reserve and thought that "it might be practicable to move the Indians to another Reserve" so that the Militia could acquire the current Sarcee Reserve for military purposes. If such a proposition would be entertained, DMR asked Indian Affairs, it wanted to know the area of the reserve and the approximate price involved.¹⁰

Indian Affairs could not oblige. The reserve was "considered to be very valuable, and has been duly set aside for the Sarcee Band of Indians under the provisions of Treaty No. 7." The only way that any portion of a reserve could be divested would be following a surrender given by the Band in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Act. "From the past attitude of the Indians in connection with the question of proposed surrender" of the Sarcee Reserve, Perley explained, "it is not at all likely that they would favourably consider any proposition for surrender of their reserve, even to be disposed of at the best prices obtainable, for their benefit."¹¹

⁸ Letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 20 July 1908, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1. Appendix A contains a list of the District Officers Commanding the district to 1946.

⁹ Copy of a minute, CGS to DM, DMD, 10 August 1903, *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Letter, DM, DMD, to DSGIA, 28 October 1908, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

¹¹ Letter, DSGIA to DM, DMD, 30 October 1908, *Ibid.*

The disappointing reply received from the Deputy Superintendent General should not have been a surprise. Since 1902, the Calgary Board of Trade, the City and other local interests had been lobbying the government to open up the reserve, or at least portions of it, for city expansion and settlement.¹² The Board of Trade's perspective was representative of correspondence received by Indian Affairs. "For all practical purposes," the Sarcee Reserve land was "of no public benefit" while held by the Indians, although it "equal[led] the best land in the district." This represented 350 acres per Indian in contrast to the "usual allotment" of 128 acres, meaning that 44,438 more acres were held in reserve than some city interests felt that the 203 Indians present were entitled to.¹³ Even though the Board argued that the "Sarcee Indians are not in any sense a progressive band, and make little or no use of the large area," Indians Affairs always maintained that the land could not be sold without the Band's consent. DIA officials saw the sale as part of a broader "scheme for the improvement of these Indians" which would require a considerable sum of money (that could be accrued, of course, from land sales).¹⁴ However, Sarcee support for any surrender was not forthcoming at the time. Chief Bull Head stated in 1904 that:

We are of one mind not to sell or give up any of our Reserve. We don't want to quarrel about it, we don't want to sell. The Reserve is just big enough for ourselves, the whitemen are bothering us to give up our land. The Treaty was made. We will try not to be cross about it. I am just as friendly as ever, I don't want to quarrel.

A few of the young Sarcee men seemed open to the suggestion of surrender, but they were influenced by the Chief and "frightened to go against their 'Medicine Men.'"¹⁵ Five years later, Indian Agent A.J. McNeill found the situation unchanged:

¹² On the land boom in Calgary during the first decade of the twentieth century, see Max Foran, "Land Speculation and Urban Development, Calgary 1884-1912," in *Frontier Calgary*, eds. A.W. Rasporich and H. Klassen (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1975), 203-220. Foran puts the zenith of this boom at 1912.

¹³ Letter, Calgary Board of Trade to Minister of the Interior, 22 March 1902, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 7543, File 29,120-I Pt. 1. On this "Excess Lands" rationale see Peggy Martin-McGuire, "First Nation Land Surrenders on the Prairies, 1896-1911," Executive Summary (Ottawa: Indian Claims Commission, 1998), xxvii-viii.

¹⁴ Letter, Calgary Board of Trade to Clifford Sifton, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 22 April 1904; Memorandum, Duncan Campbell Scott, Accountant, DIA, for DSGIA, 22 April 1904, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 7543, File 29,120-I Pt. 1.

¹⁵ Letter, Indian Agent, Sarcee Agency to Secy, DIA, 2 June 1904, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 7543, File 29,120-I Pt. 1.

I have had long interviews with the Chief and Band several times during [August] re surrender of a portion of the reserve. The Indians refused to accept any proposal offered. The majority of the young men would be willing to part with some of their land but are held back by the old people through fear and superstition. So long as these young Indians are willing to assist in supporting their relatives (the old people) and so long as the Government ration house is in operation so long will things, I fear, remain as they are.¹⁶

The military, like other parties interested in the Sarcee Reserve lands, would have to wait.

With Indian Affairs' dismissal of the Militia's offer, the military entertained other suggestions for a permanent training site in 1909 but could not come up with a suitable arrangement. Lieutenant Colonel James Walker of the 15th Light Horse, whose Estate had been used for several summer military concentrations since 1903, offered to sell his own property and acquire an adjoining ranch for the militia. Although Walker believed the site was ideal, the Department did not act on the matter, regretting that financial constraints and discussions with the Department of the Interior over another site made such a course impractical.¹⁷ This latter site was a quarter section in east Calgary that had been acquired by Indian Affairs for an Industrial School but was never used for that purpose. The Militia Department expressed an interest in acquiring it, and eventually did in late 1910, for the proposed barracks. Once obtained, however, it was not considered suitable to serve as the focal point for Calgary's military presence nor as a major training area. The city was, after all, the headquarters of the military district, and a mediocre site was unacceptable.¹⁸ Therefore, although the military was having tremendous difficulty acquiring a training ground in Alberta, the matter maintained a high priority in both Calgary and in Ottawa. Senior military officials continued to issue statements setting

¹⁶ Monthly report, Indian Agent, Sarcee Agency, July 1909, dated 16 August 1909, *Ibid*.

¹⁷ Letters, Walker to ISO, 12 January 1909, 13 February 1909, 13 March 1909, 7 December 1909; ISO to Walker, 18 February 1909, 20 March 1909, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

¹⁸ Memorandum, Frank Pedley, DIA to Frank Oliver, Minister of Interior, 16 April 1910; Report of Committee of the Privy Council, 27 April 1910; Letters, Acting DM, DMD, to AD&S, DIA, 27 May 1910, 21 September 1910; P.C. 1845, 26 September 1910, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 3867, File 87,071-1A; Reports, Engineer Services, MD 13, Cruikshank to Secy, Militia Council, 30 November 1910, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

forth the reasons why such training lands were required and the Minister of Militia and Defence approached his cabinet colleagues on the matter.¹⁹

As winter turned into spring, the Militia was still no closer to having an established site for summer camp or manoeuvres. In April 1910 a site in east Calgary was designated for that year's Camp of Instruction. Although the grounds were "convenient and in every way suitable for camping purposes and a drill ground," Lieutenant-Colonel E.A. Cruikshank (the new DOC of MD 13) reported that they were "neither sufficiently extensive nor varied in contour for manoeuvres or tactical exercises." Furthermore, all of the lands in the immediate vicinity that were of any considerable size were privately owned and fenced in, and the terrain was "bare prairie" that afforded little cover (except in ravines and hollows). In all directions troop movements would be restricted to the few public roads that existed.²⁰ Once again, the location hardly constituted an environment that was conducive to proper training.

The coming of an important visitor increased the pressure to find a more suitable area for manoeuvres. Sir John French, the Inspector General of the Imperial Service, had arranged to inspect the Camp at Calgary in late June.²¹ Such an important figure in the British Empire, reporting on the state of the Canadian Militia, commanded the utmost respect. Cruikshank believed he had found an ideal site worthy of the occasion:

About six miles distant [from the prospective Camp] is the Sarcee Indian Reservation, a large and highly diversified tract of country in a natural state, unobstructed by fences, and admirably adapted for the tactical training of all arms, particularly mounted troops and artillery. It consists of three townships comprising about seventy thousand acres, and is in shape a parallelogram, eighteen miles in length from east to west, by six miles in breadth from north to south, enclosed within a wire fence on the boundary. A few hundred acres near the agency have been fenced and brought under cultivation. Nearly all the buildings are in its immediate vicinity and can be readily avoided. The number of Indians of both sexes is about two hundred.

With the exception of the plots of land already mentioned there are no enclosures within the boundary fence. The main trail or public road leading from Calgary to Priddis and Millarville ... crosses the Reservation in a diagonal direction. This road is not fenced. The Reservation is

¹⁹ Memorandum, Secy, Militia Council, to DM, 4 Dec 1909, *Ibid.*

²⁰ Confidential letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 22 April 1910, *Ibid.*

²¹ Letter, DM, DMD to DSGIA, 29 April 1910, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

intersected by the Elbow River, Fish Creek, and tributary streams which afford at all times an ample supply of excellent water. Much of its surface is covered with thickets and copses of small trees but there are wide intervals of opening undulating prairie interspersed with ponds and marshes. The movement of troops and waggons is practicable in any direction. Dry dead wood for camp fires, and grazing for animals is available everywhere.

Cruikshank had already spoken with the resident Indian Agent who did not believe the Sarcee Indians would object to the military's use of the south-eastern portion for three days of tactical exercises.²² Militia Headquarters sought and received the formal authority of Indian Affairs to confirm the arrangements for 1910, and reserve land was used for manoeuvres that summer.²³

In the fall, the issue of the site and composition of camps for the following year arose. Cruikshank expressed strong opinions on the competing interests in his district and the need to unify annual training in Calgary at a reliable location. The 21st Alberta Hussars had trained in a regimental camp at Medicine Hat the previous summer, and the DOC believed this "was a great mistake in every way and ought not to be sanctioned again." To eradicate the internecine squabbles perpetuated amongst the Alberta militia, a suitable training camp near Calgary was needed:

There exists in the smaller towns, such as Edmonton, Medicine Hat, and Macleod, a very bitter feeling of rivalry, and I may even say, animosity towards Calgary, and some at least of the officers living in those places, would prefer not to encamp here, and have the money for supplies expended in their own home towns if they could manage it. The rank and file and most of the junior officers, however, reside in the country or in villages, and their inclination is decidedly in favour of a large camp in this vicinity.

²² Confidential letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 22 April 1910, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

²³ Letter, DM, DMD to DSGIA, 29 April 1910; Letter, DSGIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 2 May 1910, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1. The Inspector General inspected the troops in camp at Calgary from 23 to 25 June 1910, and stressed that "a training ground similar to that at Petawawa is badly needed in the west," but he did not suggest Calgary as a potential location. Instead, French noted that he had seen a large extent of suitable country near Sewell (where he had inspected the troops of MD 10) "which it appears can be obtained without great trouble or expense." He put forth the need for training ground "as one of great importance to the efficiency of the troops in the west." Report by General Sir John French, Inspector General of the Imperial Forces, Upon His Inspection of the Canadian Military Forces, Sessional Paper No. 35a (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1910), 27-8.

The site of the 1910 camp, while attractive in some ways, had clear disadvantages that detracted from its overall effectiveness, especially in terms of water supply. Similar to previous assessments, Cruikshank stated that the Sarcee Reserve possessed considerable advantages over any other site in the region. He now advocated the use of grounds at the northeast corner in close proximity to the city water supply and possessing “unsurpassable training ground for all kinds of tactical work and manoeuvre exercises.” Since nearly all of the houses on the reserve were about six miles away from this site, he felt there would be “little danger of disturbing the Indians.” The only problem was that it was about six miles from the Calgary ordnance depot, requiring the establishment of a field depot for camp equipage.²⁴ General Otter concurred with Cruikshank’s perspective. “I am quite satisfied that the neighbourhood of Calgary is a good one,” Otter noted, and he was not troubled by the issue of ordnance stores. When the time came to contact the DIA for permission, Otter anticipated that it would be granted without any trouble.²⁵

As events unfolded, Indian Affairs was apprehensive about such an arrangement. The Acting Superintendent General, Duncan Campbell Scott, refused to comply with the DMD’s request to use the land in June and July 1911 on the basis of the local Indian Affairs Inspector’s report. Inspector Markle had recommended against military use of the land, referring particularly to section 135 of the *Indian Act* which prohibited the sale or possession of alcohol on reserves.²⁶ The Militia Department would not take the decision sitting down. After reading the above response, the CGS was inclined:

to ask the DIA to reconsider their decision, in view of the fact that all houses are 6 miles away from the site of the proposed Camp, and that no liquor is allowed in Camps; consequently there seems no probability of the Indians being disturbed or affected as regards the Section of the Indian Act referred to.²⁷

²⁴ Personal Letter, Cruikshank to Brigadier General Otter, 24 September 1910, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

²⁵ Letter, Otter to Cruikshank, 28 September 1910; Letter, Cruikshank to Otter, 7 October 1910, *Ibid.*

²⁶ Letter, DM, DMD to Superintendent, DIA, 14 October 1910; Letter, Acting DSGIA to J.A. Markle, Inspector of Indian Agencies, Brocket, Alberta, 19 October 1910; Letter, Markle to Secy, DIA, 30 October 1910; Letter, Acting DSGIA to Secy, Militia Council, 9 November 1910, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

²⁷ Memorandum, CGS to Inspector General, 14 November 1910, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

At the Militia Council's direction, the Deputy Minister wrote to both the DSGIA and the Inspector, pleading for Indian Affairs to re-evaluate their position. The sale of intoxicating liquor was forbidden in Militia Camps, so military officials did not see how the Indian Act's stipulations justified the dismissal of their request.²⁸ There was no answer to their plea before the end of the year.²⁹

Indian Affairs' evasiveness was likely a product of burgeoning pressures and increasing uncertainty about the status of the northeast corner of the Reserve. The City of Calgary continued to express great interest in about 1000 acres on the north bank of the Elbow River for parkland:

This land is only a mile and a quarter from the present City limits, is well timbered on the river flat and has some fine open land on the upper bench, with clumps of willow and poplar interspersed thereon, and whole has a river frontage of about three miles.

That this could be made a great pleasure resort, not only for general recreation and for games of several kinds, but for bathing and boating as well is quite apparent.³⁰

The very features that made the land attractive for military training also made it appealing for parkland. The City also recognized the timeliness of such a transaction, with the city rapidly extended in the direction of the reserve.

The DIA, of course, recognized that the interests of the City and the Militia were in direct conflict. The City wanted to obtain the land outright, as did the Militia Department. However, since the Militia's last offer for purchase had been rejected and no subsequent demands had been placed on Indians Affairs for a surrender (only for training privileges), the DIA decided to propose to the Band surrender on behalf of the City. On 2 January Inspector John A. Markle arranged a meeting with the Sarcee to do

²⁸ Letters, DM, DMD to DSGIA, 15 November 1910; DM, DMD to Markle, 23 November 1910, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

²⁹ DMD still had not heard back from DIA as of 21 December 1910 and asked for an update, but DIA replied that the Inspector had yet to respond to the Militia's rebuttal. Letter, DM, DMD to Secy, DIA, 21 December 1910; Letter, AD&S, DIA to Secy, Militia Council, 24 December 1910, *Ibid.*

³⁰ Letter (with undated newspaper article entitled "Park on Reserve" attached), Mayor R.R. Jamieson, Calgary, to Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, 14 November 1910; see also Letter, Mayor Jamieson to Indian Agent MacNeill, Calgary, 7 December 1910, *Ibid.* In the latter correspondence, the Mayor seemed convinced that he was doing a service to society given the City's plans for the site's "beautification and use by the citizens of Calgary as a park and the non-use of this land under its present conditions by the Indians."

so, but decided that it would not be prudent to put the proposal to a vote. The likelihood of defeat was nearly certain, and the Inspector did not wish to place the prospect of a surrender “at a greater disadvantage than it is now.”³¹ Any notion of surrender seemed doomed to fail.

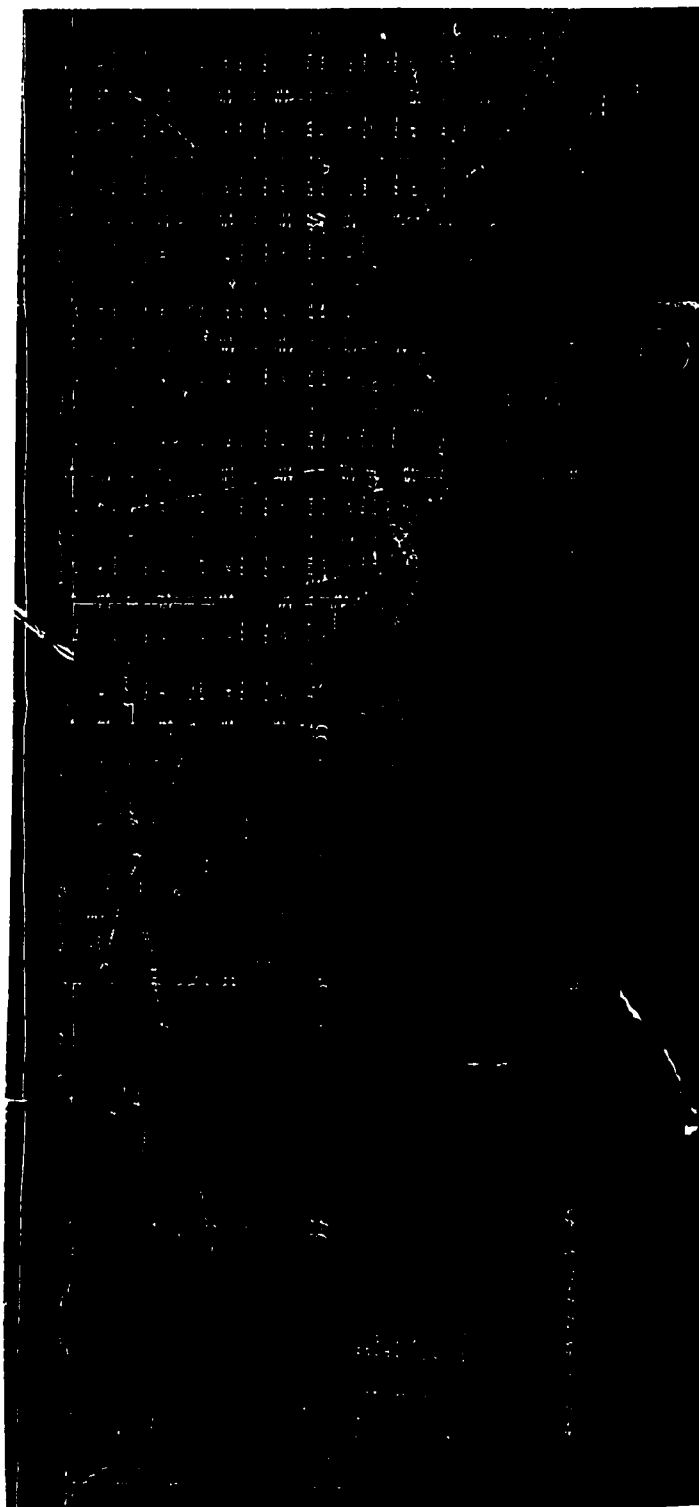
At the same time, Militia authorities, obviously undaunted by the DIA’s delays in responding to their request for annual training rights on the reserve and unaware of the Band’s recent coolness towards surrender, were increasingly convinced that the use of Sarcee Reserve lands was of highest necessity. Engineer Services in Military District No. 13 recommended that three sections (34, 35 and 36) in the northeast angle [see Figure 4] be acquired outright on which to site a barracks and a rifle range. Manoeuvring and firing rights on another twenty-seven adjacent sections of the reserve would be obtained by agreement with DIA for certain specified periods during the year. Cruikshank, in his report, suggested that such an agreement should be drawn “for a considerable number of years” and that “a nominal sum” could be paid to the Indians through their agent. The DOC could not stress enough the importance of obtaining this particular site, stating that it was the most pressing subject to be dealt with in the district. After consideration, Major-General Colin Mackenzie, the CGS, felt that there could “be no question as to the advisability, I might almost say the necessity, of acquiring” portions of the Reserve.³² These designs, well conceived within, were being spoiled from without.

On 6 January 1911, Inspector Markle hosted a meeting at Chief Bull Head’s house to discuss options for the Sarcee Reserve. Thirty male members of the Band were present. When faced with the question of allowing the militia the use of the northeast corner of the Reserve for drilling purposes during June or July, not a single member of the Band spoke in favour of the proposal. Furthermore, no one present would entertain any proposal to surrender that area of the Reserve for sale. In light of the general attitude

³¹ Memorandum, Lands and Timber Branch to Assistant DM, DIA, 25 November 1910; Letter, AD&S, DIA to Inspector Markle, 29 December 1910; Letter [very poor quality], Inspector Markle to Secy, DIA, 2 January 1911, *Ibid.*

³² Letter, MGO to DOC MD 13, 30 Dec 1910; Letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 4 January 1911; Letter, MGO to CGS, 11 January 1911, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

Figure 4: Map of Northeast Section of Sarcee Reserve Showing Sections Desired by the Department of Militia and Defence³³



³³ MAP, Portion of Sarcee I.R. No. 145 surrendered 28 February 1913, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

amongst the Sarcee, Indian Affairs could not give the DMD permission to use the grounds from camping and training.³⁴

Part of the problem was in the approach. By presenting the Militia's request for annual use and the City's desire for a surrender at the same meeting, the Inspector all but guaranteed the rejection of both proposals. In light of his impressions of the 2 January meeting with the Sarcee men, Markle must have anticipated the Band's refusal to surrender the land. Nevertheless, he went ahead with the proposal as instructed by Ottawa, and after soliciting a uniformly negative response from the Band regarding the City's offer, he then proceeded to convey the military's wishes. This context was hardly conducive to constructive negotiations between the military (through its government agent) and an assembly of people who were undoubtedly already on the defensive, especially where land was concerned.

The Militia Department was relentless. Refusing to accept the decision of the Sarcee as final, the Militia Council approached the DIA to try and devise a way to acquire the northeast portion of the Reserve. The Quartermaster General and the Master General of the Ordnance interviewed the DSGIA and ascertained that the most likely proposal that would be acceptable to the Sarcee Band would be a lease of the required areas rather than a purchase. If a long-term lease of sections 34, 35 and 36 (ninety-nine years was suggested) could not be obtained, but the Indians were willing to lease other sections for manoeuvre purposes, it was decided to find a site in the vicinity of the manoeuvre area outside of the reserve on which to construct a rifle range and barracks. Indian Affairs was again asked to approach the Sarcee Indians and ask them to re-consider, keeping in mind the utmost importance of the application. Inspector Markle was again tasked with the responsibility.³⁵

The Inspector agreed to take up the matter with the Sarcee as early as possible, but he was not optimistic. Markle found the whole notion of "locking up" the land for a

³⁴ Letter, Markle, Alberta Inspectorate, Sarcee Agency, to Secy, DIA, 6 January 1911; Letter, AD&S, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 13 January 1911, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

³⁵ Memorandum, Secy, Militia Council, to MGO, 21 January 1911; Report, MGO for Militia Council, 1 February 1911; Letter, DM, DMD, to DSGIA, 16 February 1911, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1. Memorandum, Mr. Orr, Lands and Timber Branch (LTB), DIA, to DM, DIA, 23 February 1911; Letter, DSGIA to Secy, Militia Council, 10 March 1911; Letter, DSGIA to Inspector Markle, Red Deer, 10 March 1911, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

period up to ninety-years, or even less, questionable at best. On the authority of the DIA, he had spoken with Band members about a land surrender and measured a strong feeling of support among a good number. The problem was that sub-divided land was selling for “a great deal more” than the upset price of \$10/acre that was suggested to the Indians, and several of the Band members felt it prudent to divide the northeastern corner of the reserve into lots and then sell them at public auction. Few, Markle believed, would support a surrender at a low rate of return. The Inspector suggested that, if the land was surrendered and either the City or the DMD wanted any portion, they should have to purchase it “in the regular way – by securing it at public auction.”³⁶ Certainly his beliefs were at odds with the military’s aims. Nevertheless, the Inspector was the one to bring the militia’s proposal before the Band. On 27 April he held a meeting with the Band and, as they had done on 6 January, the voting members rejected the militia’s proposition. One of the Band spokesmen asked Markle to inform Ottawa that “he hoped they would not again be bothered with a like request.”³⁷

Once notified of yet another setback, militia officials began to realize that they were fighting a battle they could not win. Since the Sarcee declined to consider any proposal with regard to their reserve, the Militia Department felt it “important that steps should be at once taken with a view to ascertaining whether there is any possibility of securing a suitable training area for the Alberta troops elsewhere.”³⁸ As a contingency, military officials had been looking west and east of Calgary at other nearby Indian Reserves as potential manoeuvres areas and artillery ranges. The Blood and Blackfoot Reserves received specific attention [see Figure 5], especially the latter because a large section was being sold at public auction in June 1911.³⁹ The prospect seemed promising. However, several features made the Blackfoot site near Gleichen somewhat

³⁶ Letter, Markle to Secy, DIA, 18 March 1911, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

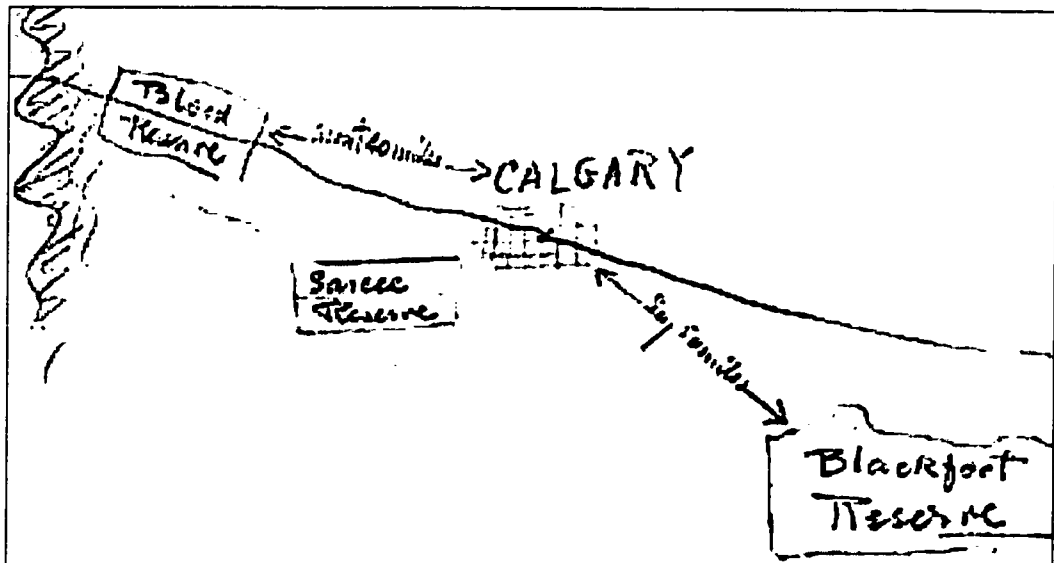
³⁷ Telegram, Markle to DIA, 27 April 1911; Letter, Markle to Secy, DIA, 1 May 1911, *Ibid.* In the letter, the Inspector noted that “rarely a week passes without these Indians being haggled either by individuals or through the Calgary newspapers regarding a surrendering of some of their land.” He believed this had a tendency to consolidate Band opposition to lease or surrender proposals and prevented them from “considering a deal which might be made otherwise and a bargain for their own benefit, too.”

³⁸ Letter, AD&S, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 1 May 1911, *Ibid.* Letter, DMD to Deputy & Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 8 May 1911; Letter, MGO to DOC MD 13, 11 May 1911, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

³⁹ Report, MGO for Militia Council, 1 February 1911, *Ibid.*

problematic. First, the lands were sold in quarter sections at auction which drove up the price and made the acquisition of a large, unbroken block of land difficult and risky. Second, the landscape was less than ideal. The trail leading to the reserve was an “ordinary prairie road, dusty in dry weather and muddy in wet weather,” which coupled with the bare, rolling prairie and sandy soil would swallow troops in dusty clouds. Firewood and drinking water were in short supply. Stores, camp equipment and supplies would have to be hauled ten miles uphill from the railway. And as a prospective training ground, the Blackfoot Reserve site did not appear to Cruikshank “to present any special advantages,” particularly in comparison to the Sarcree Reserve. “The concentration of troops would be much more difficult and the expense connected with the transportation of troops must necessarily be considerably greater,” the DOC suggested, and Site “A,” the nearest possible location, was “practically a day’s march from the railway.” Furthermore, the available terrain for training would be limited and unvaried. Of the four potential sites designated near Gleichen, Cruikshank could not consider any of them to be convenient or desirable for military purposes.⁴⁰

Figure 5: Map Drawn Showing Proximity of Blackfoot, Blood and Sarcree Reserves to Calgary⁴¹



⁴⁰ Letter, AD&S, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 11 May 1911; Letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 25 September 1911, *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Hand drawn map (May 1911), NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

While the prospect of a permanent training site at the Blackfoot Reserve came and went, the Militia was forced to seek permission to use a part of the Sarcee Reserve for tactical exercises as it had done the year before. It could not acquire the land to establish a camp or to build a rifle range, but it was not willing to concede its prized manoeuvring terrain without a try. On 9 May 1911, with training season looming on the horizon, the Militia applied to Indian Affairs for permission to use the reserve for four days training. Perhaps surprisingly, in light of the overwhelming rejections of the DMD's purchase and lease proposals earlier in the year, the members of "Bull's Head Band" (as they called themselves on the agreement) granted the permission through their Indian Agent to the military to use the land from 20-23.⁴²

The success of the meeting may reveal the problem in the previous failed attempts. This time the Indian Agent had presented the Militia's case to the Band, not the Inspector. Every time Inspector Markle had approached the Band on behalf of the military in the last twelve months, the proposals had been rejected. The Inspector's own designs may have been hindering the military's interests. Markle was unabashedly supportive of the surrender of the northeastern portion of the reserve, and was also committed to securing the maximum amount of money for the Sarcee Band. He was convinced that the promise of perpetual rations was the real selling point that won over Indians in other surrenders, and the funding for rations and other band endeavours was dependent upon the amount of money brought in.⁴³ More than likely, Markle was convinced that the military would undercut the price and thus undermine the motivation for the surrender of Indian lands the DIA felt were surplus. When he was not involved in the negotiation process with the Sarcee, the military enjoyed a higher likelihood of reaching an agreement for the use of lands.

⁴² Letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 9 May 1911; Letter, DM, DMD to DM, DIA, 18 May 1911; Letter, AD&S, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 22 May 1911; Letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 5 June 1911, *Ibid.* Letter, Indian Agent, Sarcee, to Secy, DIA, 29 May 1911; Letter, Acting DM, DMD, to DSGIA, 31 May 1911, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1. Agreement, "Bull's Head Band," 29 May 1911, INAC, ILR.

⁴³ See, regarding Blackfoot Reserve lands, Letter, Markle to Laird, February 7, 1907, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 3563, File 82/18; regarding negotiations with the Peigan in 1908, NAC, RG 10, Vol. 4034, File 302340-1. A thorough overview of Markle's approach to negotiations is provided in Martin-McGuire, "First Nation Land Surrenders on the Prairies, 1896-1911."

The previous year's uncertainty over the future status and employability of the Sarcee Reserve as a militia training area was causing military officials to reconsider their position and their approach. In October 1911, military officials in Ottawa began to ponder that the nature of DMD's wishes might not have been understood by Indian Affairs and the Sarcee Band. "A lease of the ground for the whole year would," General Mackenzie reasoned, "naturally, be viewed by the Indians in quite a different light to some form of contract to use it annually for a period of, at the most, one month." For the time being, and until a suitable training area was actually secured, the CGS decided that the proper approach would be to ask for use of part of the reserve on a year to year basis. This was, in effect, what the Department had done the last two years out of necessity, their other proposals having been rejected. They decided to act early. In late October, in an attempt to achieve some measure of stability for the upcoming year, the DMD asked permission to use the usual portion of Sarcee for exercises from 14-28 June 1912. DIA stated that the local Indian Agent had been contacted to find out from Indians whether they would grant permission.⁴⁴ However, by the end of the month the Militia was informed that a salient change had taken place at Sarcee, again raising the possibility of a more permanent arrangement.

News of the death of Chief Bull Head⁴⁵ renewed hope amongst military officials that negotiations could be reopened with the Sarcee for the purchase or lease of the northeastern section of the reserve. In October 1911, Cruikshank informed the Militia

⁴⁴ Memorandum, CGS to MGO, 2 October 1911; Letter, MGO to CGS, 3 October 1911; Letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 11 October 1911, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1. Letter, Asst Secy, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 23 Oct 1911, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1.

⁴⁵ Chief Bull Head died on 14 March 1911. Nevertheless, he strongly influenced Sarcee sentiments on surrender even after his passing. His prediction of "dire happenings of the most weird character" and constant warnings to his followers to "under no circumstances ... yield to the persuasive forces of the whites and to retain their land at all cost" continued to resonate. Some of Bull Head's most ardent followers professed to seeing Bull Head sitting on the mound of his grave and appearing to them every night "in flesh and blood," warning them against selling the reserve. In death, the Albertan reported that the spirit of the "poor old Bull Head weeps like a child in deadly fear that his people will not heed the advice given." Strange happenings at the deceased Chief's cabin struck terror in the Band members, who took a wide detour (up to a quarter mile) to avoid it after nightfall. No one entered the cabin after his death and the Indians decided to destroy it. "It is just possible," the Albertan suggested, "that the Indian superstition and the natural prejudice of ages may be sufficient and powerful enough to overthrow the whole deal [of surrendering the land to the city] and upset the best laid plans of the local municipal authorities. The situation is an odd one and probably the most unique with which any set of officials have ever had to

Council that as the “principal Chief” of the band, Bull Head had been “unalterably opposed to the alienation of any portion of this reserve,” but now that he was deceased the DOC believed that negotiations towards Militia acquisition of the land could “now be resumed with a greater prospect of success.” Furthermore, demographics suggested to the military official that the band’s requirements and claims to the reserve were diminishing:

This band of Indians now numbers only two hundred men, women and children and the area of their reservation is 69,120 acres. They are understood to be steadily diminishing in numbers and the extinction of their title in this property and their removal to some other locality at a greater distance from a populous city would seem a matter of policy, and only a question of time.

Although the acquisition of manoeuvre rights would answer all of the Department’s training needs at the time, “except so far as the questions of a barrack site and rifle and artillery ranges are concerned,” he cautioned that in a year or two the existing rifle range would no longer be adequate.⁴⁶ “No other locality can be found in the vicinity,” Cruikshank reported, “which offers such advantages as that part of the reserve, without an extraordinary expense.”⁴⁷

On 1 December 1911, armed with the information contained in Cruikshank’s letter, the Deputy Minister of Defence again approached the DSGIA to arrange for use of the reserve. In light of the “phenomenal growth of the city” that would force an abandonment of the present rifle range at Calgary in the immediate future, and the consideration that “land values in the neighbourhood of Calgary have reached such an exorbitant figure that the amount of land necessary for the requirements of the Department could not be purchased except at a prohibitive figure,” the military appealed for access to Sarcee lands. The DM sought a “lease for a term of years” of three sections of the reserve for a barrack and rifle range, coupled with manoeuvre rights over twenty-

contend.” Copy of article, 29 April 1911, in INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1. See also Dempsey, “Chula.”

⁴⁶ The existing Rifle Range at Calgary was becoming a serious problem and became a source of growing anxiety in the years ahead. See Letter, Master-General of the Ordnance, Canadian Militia, to DOC, MD 13, 26 October 1911; Letter, Lt. Col. EA Cruikshank, DOC, MD 13, to Secy, Militia Council, 31 October 1911; Memorandum, MGO, to Private Secy, Minister of Militia and Defence, 10 June 1912, RG 24, Vol. 6255, File AHQ 18/36/8 Pt. 1.

⁴⁷ Confidential report, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, HQ, 11 October 1911, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

seven additional sections. Lastly, the Department of Militia and Defence requested an option to purchase all of the lands if they were ever placed on the market.⁴⁸ Indian Affairs officials in Ottawa were not averse to the prospect of approaching the Sarcee, and tasked Inspector Markle to discuss the question with the Indians in co-operation with Cruikshank.

On the afternoon of 18 December, Markle and Cruikshank visited the Sarcee along with William Gordon, the acting Agent of the Band. A meeting was convened, attended by twenty-four adult males of the Sarcee Band. Through an interpreter, John One Spot, Markle explained to the Indians the instructions he had received from his Department and the nature of the military's requirements for training space. Big Belly rose and stated that, while he was not a chief, he spoke on behalf of the band and expressed a willingness to lease the three sections desired for a barracks site, rifle range, and manoeuvre and drill purposes. A large majority of those present agreed to a "resolution" permitting DMD use of the land so long as the lessees "behaved themselves." Although no Indian objected openly to the decision, five band members withdrew from the meeting and did not sign the resolution. Markle surmised that they obviously disagreed with it.

Several provisions contained in the original proposal were dropped at the request of the band members. The Indians were asked what rent they considered reasonable for the land and Big Belly replied that they would accept no rent. The meeting was informed that the Militia Department desired to pay a fair rent, but Big Belly persisted in his refusal and all but one of the band members present concurred with this position. Furthermore, the Sarcee would not agree to any arrangement spanning a number of years. One band member reasoned that the land should be kept free of any lease as they might be disposed to consider a surrender and sale of the parcel of land at some future date. Consequently, the lease would continue only so long as a majority of male members of the band over twenty-one years of age consented to the military's presence. As well, the question of obtaining manoeuvre rights over the remaining sections was not taken up. Cruikshank considered it "inadvisable" to pursue the matter at the meeting and he entertained no

⁴⁸ Letter, DM, DMD, to DSGIA, 1 December 1911, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

doubt that an arrangement could be reached when the rights were actually required. At the conclusion of the proceedings, Big Belly approached the DOC and asked him to provide a Christmas Feast for the Band. Considering the resolution to which the Indians had consented, Cruikshank was pleased to comply with the request.⁴⁹

Although a somewhat qualified success, the government officials were pleasantly surprised by the outcome. Cruikshank seemed reasonably satisfied with the concessions, ascertaining that conditions embodied in the resolution were “the best obtainable at the present moment.” As for Markle, the outcome was more than he had anticipated. The DSGIA passed the information on to the Militia Council, where the arrangement was greeted with appreciation. As the CGS noted on a memorandum from the MGO, Cruikshank had done “a valuable service to the Dept in securing this ground which with the adjoining land, will be one of the best Camp and manoeuvring areas the Dept has.” The MGO offered his personal gratitude to the DOC for his efforts and passed along Headquarters’ appreciation for the results obtained. The agreement would fit in nicely with the plans of the new Minister, Colonel Sam Hughes.⁵⁰

Alas, this jubilation was short-lived. In early 1912, DMD approached DIA to finalize arrangements. The military proposed (with Indian Affairs’ approval) to deposit an annual rent for the property to the credit of the Indians, notwithstanding their refusal of rent, as it was “considered only fair and just that such action should be taken.” DMD also requested DIA’s concurrence to send a copy of the resolution to the Department of Justice

⁴⁹ Letter with resolution attached, Markle to Secy, DIA, 20 December 1911, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1; Letter with copy of resolution attached, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 20 December 1911, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1. One band member, who stated that he was in agreement with the lease of the land, declined to sign the final resolution because he felt the Indians should receive a rental.

⁵⁰ Letter, Markle to Secy, DIA, 20 December 1911; Letter, DSGIA to Secy, Militia Council, 28 December 1911, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-2 Vol. 1. Letter, DOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 20 December 1911, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1. Marginalia on Memorandum from MGO to CGS, 29 December 1911; Letter, MGO to DOC MD 13, 10 January 1912, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 2. As announced in May 1912, Col. Hughes believed that the consolidation of training would result in greater economy for the Department. Hughes planned to maintain fourteen large training camps on the same scale of the new facility at Petawawa in order to cut down on the expense of hosting annual militia training. This meant the creation of many new camps: two in Saskatchewan and British Columbia (in the north and south of each province); Ontario would have two new camps (in London and Toronto, as well as the existing one at Petawawa) as would Quebec (in Montreal and Quebec City); and Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Alberta would receive one. Calgary Herald, 29 May 1912, 1. The DMD and Hughes himself wanted a Sarcee site to fulfill the role for Alberta.

to ensure that it contained sufficient authority to build and occupy buildings on the land.⁵¹ Apart from correspondence stating that the matter was under consideration, DIA was not forthcoming with any substantive response, although in early April the Department “expected the matter to be disposed of in short time.” Such was not the case. With annual training in June fast approaching, the Deputy Minister of Defence asked Indian Affairs to confirm as soon as possible that, pending the settlement of the lease question, the militia would be able to use the northeast portion of the reserve for training.⁵² It would appear that the militia never received the permission required, and the local units returned to Reservoir Park for seasonal camp in June.⁵³

The reason for Indian Affairs’ reticence in 1912 was the contemplation of surrender and sale of Sarcee Reserve land. With land prices soaring in the region and Bull Head’s dire warnings fading into memory, the DIA was increasingly convinced that the Sarcee Band would sell Reserve land. If subdivided and sold in small parcels, the Indian Agent felt that the 1600 to 1800 acres laying northeast of the Elbow River would yield more than \$100,000.⁵⁴ There was little incentive to obstruct the process by confirming the Sarcee-military agreement concluded in 1911. Duncan Campbell Scott, Chief Accountant at DIA, revealed the position against the leasing arrangement in an internal memorandum to the DSGIA:

I think the question of a lease of a portion of the Sarcee Reserve to the Department of Militia and Defence should be considered in connection with the desire of the Indians to surrender this portion of their reserve. It would be against the best interests of the Band to allow the Department of Militia and Defence to lease this portion. I notice the consent to lease is made conditionally at the pleasure of the majority of the male members of the Band. I am certain that a majority of male members would now consent to sell this corner of the Reserve so that the lease might immediately begin to be inoperative. This is at present the most valuable

⁵¹ Letter, Acting DM, DMD, to DM[sic], Indian Affairs, 11 January 1912, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 2.

⁵² Letters, Assistant Deputy and Secy of Indian Affairs, to DM, DMD, 19 January 1912, 4 April 1912; Letters, DM, DMD to DM, DIA, 26 Feb 1912, 27 March 1912, 20 April 1912, 17 July 1912, *Ibid*.

⁵³ The archival record appears to be silent on this matter. Neither DMD or DIA files indicate any response to the Militia’s requests. Furthermore, *Calgary Herald* coverage of the Military Camp does not mention the Sarcee Reserve, but suggests that field exercises were conducted to the boundary of it. *Calgary Herald*, 31 May, 17-28 June 1912.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Letter, Chief Accountant to DSGIA, 14 November 1912; Description for Surrender, 28 December 1912, RG 10, Vol. 7543, File 29,120-1 Pt. 1.

part of the Reserve, and the Militia Department should only be allowed to get control of it by purchase in the open market.

Scott could not recommend any lease on the northern portion of the reserve unless it was terminable when the Sarcee surrendered the land for sale.⁵⁵ There would be no special treatment for the Militia. It was a prospective client like any other.

Slowly the realities of the situation came into focus for both parties involved. The military authorities, unaware of Indian Affairs' intentions, pressured the latter department for a decision regarding future military use of the reserve in late November 1912. Nearly a year had passed since the Sarcee had ratified the resolution offering the militia use of the land for a barracks and rifle range, and still there was nothing to show for it. A great deal of preliminary work, such as the construction of a rifle range and water supply, would be needed to prepare the camp ground for training and other purposes if the militia were "to derive the fullest benefit from the use of this area during next year's training season." DMD pushed again for an early and favourable consideration of the matter so that the necessary plans and specifications for infrastructure development could be prepared during the winter. With the response from Indian Affairs, the militia's hopes were shattered. "The Department has under contemplation," the Secretary at DIA informed the Militia Council, "some other way of disposing of the portion of this reserve applied for by your Department, and it will not be possible to comply with your request." Upon receipt of the letter, the Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, drafted a letter to the Minister of the Interior (W.J. Roche) asking him to look personally into the matter and "have it arranged as the Indians have agreed."⁵⁶ This high-level appeal was to no avail. Although authority was granted at the last minute to allow the militia to use a portion of the reserve for sixteen days of artillery practice during the 1913 summer camp,⁵⁷ the

⁵⁵ Memorandum, Chief Accountant to DSGIA, 14 November 1912, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1. This is a different document from that cited in the previous footnote.

⁵⁶ Memorandum, DSGIA to Secy, DIA, 26 December 1912, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1; Letter and marginalia, Assistant Deputy Secy, DIA, to Militia Council, 28 December 1912, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 2.

⁵⁷ Letter, Acting DM, DMD, to DSGIA, 6 June 1913; Telegram, Secy, DIA, to T.J. Fleetham, Indian Agent, Calgary, 7 June 1913; Letter, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 9 June 1913, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

resolution passed by the Sarcee in 1911 was now moot. The militia was still without a reliable camp and training area in the Calgary area.

In late 1913, Hughes again approached Roche about the possibility of the military acquiring the northeast corner of Sarcee I.R. His counterpart revealed important changes in the situation. The Sarcee Band surrendered 1650 acres northeast of the Elbow River on 28 February of that year, and the remaining five thousand acres north and west of the Elbow on 26 August 1913.⁵⁸ They were subsequently subdivided to be sold. Forwarding a memorandum from Duncan Campbell Scott, the new Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Roche conveyed relevant information to Hughes. The land had been valued at \$235,918.50, and according to the terms of the surrender the proceeds of the sale were to be at least \$150,000. The City had applied for a number of the lots along the river for park purposes. The Minister of the Interior obviously concurred with Scott's conclusion: "Considering the use to which the land would be put by the Militia Department if they acquired it, I cannot recommend disposing of any portion of this surrendered land to them."⁵⁹

Fortunately for the military, Indian Affairs had yet to place the surrendered Sarcee land on the market in the summer 1914. The great land boom that had justified the need for the land and the high prices anticipated by the Sarcee was over by the time the surrender was obtained, the City of Calgary was in dire financial straits, and the DIA was not as anxious to sell while the market was relatively deflated. Factors such as test wells being sunk near the reserve and consequent debates over whether or not the lands should be subdivided or should be sold in groups delayed the process further.⁶⁰ This

⁵⁸ Undated copy of 1913 surrenders, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

⁵⁹ Letter, W.J. Roche, Minister of the Interior, to Colonel the Hon. Sam Hughes, MMD, 1 December 1913, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 2. Memorandum, Duncan C. Scott to Mr. Mitchell, 28 November 1914 [typographical error – should be 1913], *Ibid.*

P.C. 973, 30 April 1913, and surrender documents dated 28 April and 3 March 1903, ILR.

⁶⁰ Letter (with newspaper article "Site of First Well Is Announced Today by Mowbray-Berkeley" attached), Fleetham to DSGIA, 19 February 1914; Letter, Chief Surveyor to DSGIA, 27 February 1914; Letter, Fleetham to DSGIA, 25 May 1914; Letter, DSGIA to Fleetham, 13 June 1914, RG 10, Vol. 4068, File 423,020. In addition, a prolonged financial crisis gripped Calgary's local government after 1913 which, as Calgary historian Max Foran explained, "had incalculable implications for civic policies. Municipal revenues were insufficient to meet current expenditures and debt obligations." The situation continued to deteriorate during and after the First World War, and the City's financial position was likely worse in 1920 than in 1915. Foran, "The Civic Corporation and Urban Growth: Calgary, 1884-1930" (Ph.D. Dissertation,

postponement was costly to the DIA in light of subsequent events, but did allow the military to use part of the Reserve for range practice that June. The instructing officer in gunnery, who tended to be “very conservative in his praise” according to the *Calgary Herald*, deemed Sarcee “perfect as an artillery range. Almost every situation likely to face the troops in actual warfare, including the swimming of a river, can be worked out on it.”⁶¹ Actual warfare was precisely what was in store for many of the men who had trained in Calgary that summer.

While the dust clouds were blanketing the camp at Reservoir Park that summer, a diplomatic storm brewed in Europe that refused to break. On 4 August 1914, rumours of war became a declaration of war. The Dominion of Canada, with her imperial counterparts, was called upon to do her part. Ottawa authorized the militia units in Alberta to recruit to war strength, but Calgary barrack accommodation was nil and equipment and uniforms virtually non-existent. Rather than abide by pre-war mobilization plans, Colonel Hughes decided to adopt his own. The newly formed numbered battalions were sent directly to a new campsite being constructed at Valcartier, rather than concentrating near their place of mobilization and then sent to Petawawa as provided for in 1911 mobilization plans.⁶² Although Hughes has been sharply criticized for the considerable confusion, even chaos, that surrounded mobilization in the summer and fall of 1914, it is doubtful that the chronic shortage of training and camp space in Alberta would have facilitated a smoother mobilization process had he abided by 1911 plans.

By the spring of 1915, it was apparent that any illusions of a short war held in 1914 were delusions. There were as yet no Allied victories to celebrate. In mid-March,

University of Calgary, July 1981), 186. This was hardly a fiscal environment conducive to an expensive land purchase from the Sarcee for parkland as had been the subject of earlier proposals and negotiations.

⁶¹ *Calgary Herald*, 23 June 1914, 1.

⁶² Cuniffe, *Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki*, 17-18. Hughes' biographer called the creation of Valcartier Camp the Minister's “greatest achievement in the mobilization process. See Chapter 11, “War and Mobilization: One Man's Show, 1914,” Ronald Haycock, *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1885-1916* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 177-97. For a critical appraisal of Hughes' decisions to discard Gwatkin and Mackenzie's 1911 mobilization scheme, to bypass militia headquarters and the district staffs and appeal directly to every militia battalion, and to summon soldiers to the unfinished camp at Valcartier amidst considerable confusion, even chaos, see Stephen Harris, *The Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 94-7.

the British reported 13,000 casualties (including 100 Canadians) at Neuve Chapelle, a defeat that spoiled any chance at a breakthrough on the Western Front. This experience foretold tremendous casualties in a war that would bear no resemblance to the mobile warfare everyone sought. It would be a long, arduous journey to victory. The CGS, Willoughby Gwatkin, had argued as early as September 1914 that centrally located depots were needed to gather and train unbrigaded recruits. Hughes originally push aside such suggestions, but the changed military context created the need for new approaches to the domestic training and mobilization of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). Military officials decided that the majority of units raised in Western Canada would receive preliminary training in their military district of origin and then proceed directly to England.⁶³ The need for a mobilization camp in Alberta was dire.

In April 1915, the *Calgary Herald* announced the Government's intentions to use the Sarcee Reserve as the major Military Camp in Alberta. "Plan Great Rifle Range on Reserve," a headline proclaimed, "Line of 250 Targets to be Erected by Canadian Engineers ... Will be Purely for Service Training ... Arrangement Will Permit 750 Men to Shoot at Same Time." The project sounded grand indeed. Military Engineer Lt.-Col. Lowe had looked over the proposed site for two days and indicated that "the big military camp" to be located at Sarcee would have "the largest rifle range in the middle west." The range and staggered targets would facilitate "so much rifle practice that there can be no excuse for any unit which does not gain a high stage of proficiency in that important part of its training," and entire battalions could practice at the same time. Construction was imminent, the newspaper suggested.⁶⁴

T.J. Fleetham, the new Indian Agent at Sarcee, read for the first time of the Government's intention to make use of the Sarcee Reserve as a wartime mobilization camp. He promptly contacted his superiors at Indian Affairs. Fleetham presumed, of

⁶³ Cuniffe, *Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki*, 18, 22; Haycock, *Hughes*, 201; Ronald Haycock, "Of Times and People: The Early History of Camp Borden, 1905-1916," *Ontario History* LXXXIII, 4 (December 1991), 261; Letter, CGS to Minister of Militia and Defence, 21 September 1914, NAC, W.G. Gwatkin Papers, MG 30 G13 F4.

⁶⁴ *Calgary Herald*, 14 April 1915, 1. In an editorial the following day, the *Herald* seemed more concerned about civic interest in the postwar uses of the proposed range than its military application. The one question it had was "Will the range be built so that citizens and cadets can reach it in the evenings? Or will it be built too far from the car lines?" 15 April 1915, 6.

course, that the area was the northeast corner that had been surrendered and desired more information. In any case, he reminded the DIA officials, "great care ... will have to be taken re stray bullets across the river."⁶⁵ Indian Affairs Headquarters in Ottawa had not been informed up to this point. J.D. Maclean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, contacted the Militia Council to inquire about what was transpiring:

I beg to inform you that the Department has been advised by its local agent that your Department is erecting targets, etc., on the Sarcee Indian reserve, and I have to request that you will be good enough to advise by whose permission such action is being taken, as no authority has been given either by the Department or its local agent.

I would point out that the Indians will expect to be paid for any use of their land. It appears that a large portion of the northeast corner of the reserve has been taken possession of, and two officers have been sent to put up targets, etc.⁶⁶

In fact, before Indian Affairs even contacted the Militia Department about the military's designs, the Reserve was bustling with activity and infrastructure was being put in place at an incredible rate [see appendix B].

The District Officer Commanding in Calgary had anticipated the direction of the road of negotiations that laid ahead. The same day as DIA wrote to DMD to find out basic details, Cruikshank wrote a letter to his Headquarters suggesting compensation for manoeuvre rights, field training and target practice on the Sarcee reserve. He urgently requested the authority for a payment of \$225 as compensation for use of the reserve during the upcoming Mobilization Camp, basing his amount on the following estimate:

1. payment of \$1.00 per head to all the members of the Sarcee Band - \$200;
2. The sum of \$10.00 to the principle Chief;
3. The sum of \$5.00 to each of the three Councillors of the Band - \$15.

The DOC believed this would be acceptable to the band, and military officials in Ottawa immediately granted him the requisite authority to consult with the Sarcee. On 11 May 1915, without any serious resistance, the Band passed a resolution granting permission to

⁶⁵ Letter, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 16 April 1915, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

⁶⁶ Letter, McLean to Secy, Militia Council, 27 April 1915, *Ibid*.

the Military to use the Reserve for military purposes (except heavy gun firing) for that year so long as no damage was done to standing crops or fences.⁶⁷

The Sarcee had agreed to allow the military to use the land, but the Indian Agent expressed his dismay at the military's decision regarding wood supply. Fleetham had discussed with his superiors in Ottawa and with the DOC the prospect of having the Indians supply all of the firewood required at the military camp. After all, seeding was almost complete and as a result the Indians were not earning anything at the time. Fleetham was aware that other parties were supplying wood to the Camp, but he trusted that the bureaucrats in Ottawa would secure this work for the Band members, especially in light of the latter's willingness to allow the militia use of the land. Cruikshank, for his part, strongly recommended to the Militia Department that the Indians' tender be accepted.⁶⁸ When informed that DMD decided against the Indian Agent's offer, Fleetham was openly dismayed:

The Indians are very much disappointed at your giving the wood contract to outsiders at a higher rate, more especially when you have to ask favour from them, and who are Wards of the Government. I can only say, had I not got their permission as enclosed before they were told the wood contract had been given elsewhere, I should have had some difficulty, and I would not have blamed them for refusing it.⁶⁹

The military had missed another opportunity to consolidate its relations with the Indians in a mutually beneficial way.

⁶⁷ Letter, Cruikshank, DOC, MD 13, to Secy, Military Council, HQ, Ottawa, 27 April 1915; Telegram (fragment), Quarter-Master General to DOC MD 13, n.d. (early May 1915); Copy, Band Resolution, Sarcee I.R., 11 May 1915, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1. Fleetham suggested that, in light of the circumstances ("the bottom part of this land has been cut up with trenches, rifle pits, sewers etc.), the military should purchase all of the surrendered land for \$200,000 – the Indian Agent considered this "a fair value" if the Department concurred. In the meantime, he believed that rent should be collected from the time the Militia commenced operations and the amount should be "sufficient to cover the interest on the amount of cash advanced to the Indians on this surrender." Letter, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 8 May 1915, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1. Hugh Dempsey mistakenly stated that the military authorities and Sarcee Band had arranged a long-term lease prior to the establishment of Camp Sarcee in 1915. Of course, this was not the case. Dempsey, *Calgary: Spirit of the West* (Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House Limited, 1994), 106.

⁶⁸ Letter, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 26 April 1915; Telegram, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 30 April 1915; Letter, Fleetham to DIA, 30 April 1915; Letter, DOC MD 13 to Duncan C. Scott, DSGIA, 3 May 1915; Letter, Fleetham to DSGIA, 5 May 1915, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

⁶⁹ Letter, J.J. Fleetham, Indian Agent, Sarcee Agency, to Col. Cruickshanks (*sic*), DOC MD 13, May 1915, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

In October 1915, DIA contacted Militia and Defence for payment of an account against them amounting to \$1000. The April agreement between the Indians, through their Agent, and Colonel Cruikshank had been on the understanding that they would receive fair compensation for the occupation of their land for troop training. After six months of use, the land had been badly disrupted. Prior to the military's occupation, the land was surveyed, subdivided into lots, marked with mounds, and staked with the intention that it would be sold. Owing to the military's activities, however, the mounds and stakes had been destroyed and the land would have to be resurveyed prior to sale. All this would mean additional expense to the Band, and Indian Affairs therefore expected DMD to bear the cost of this re-survey in addition to rental charges.⁷⁰

The military looked into the matter. Cruikshank's report was somewhat different than that provided by Indian Affairs. The remuneration of \$225 that had been agreed upon and paid to the Sarcee through DIA was for manoeuvre rights to a portion of the Reserve that was not used for camping. The question of compensation for use of the surrendered portion of the reserve, on which the camp site had been formed, was never considered or discussed. With regard to re-surveying of the land, the C.R.C.E., MD 13, estimated costs of about \$500.⁷¹ While DIA hounded DMD for payment, military authorities swapped correspondence trying to get the paperwork in order. Whether through a series of oversights or a muted means of expressing his displeasure at the compensation request, the recently-promoted Brigadier Cruikshank delayed the process by neglecting to recommend that the amount was "fair and just" until mid-January 1916. On 27 January the \$1000 cheque was cut to DIA.⁷²

In April 1916, with training season looming, the military again sought use of the reserve for the upcoming year. Headquarters in Ottawa asked Cruikshank to ensure that

⁷⁰ Letter, Assistant Deputy Secretary, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 30 October 1915, *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Letter, Cruikshank to Secy, Militia Council, 27 November 1915, *Ibid.*

⁷² Letter, Asst. Deputy and Secy, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 11 December 1915; Letter, QMG to DOC MD 13, 17 December 1915; Letter, GOC MD 13, to Secy, Militia Council, 22 December 1915; Letter, Cruikshank to QMG, 4 January 1916; Letter, QMG to GOC MD 13, 10 January 1916; Letter, QMG to GOC MD 13, 15 January 1916; Letter, AD&S, DIA, to Secy, Military Council, 17 January 1916; Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Secy, DIA, 21 January 1916; Certificate, Cruikshank, Commanding Military District No. 13, 18 January 1916; Marginalia and letter, GOC, MD 13, to Secy, Militia Council, 18 January 1916; Note to file, J. Lyons Biggar, Director General of Supply and Transportation, 24 January 1916; Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 27 January 1916, *Ibid.*

there was no trouble with the Indians in securing occupation privileges, and asked him to “take such steps as may be necessary to satisfy any legitimate claims they may have in return for the use of their property.” Meeting with the Indian Agent, Cruikshank proposed the same terms as the previous year.⁷³ Fleetham quickly responded on behalf of the Indians that they were willing to allow the troops use of the land south of the Elbow for manoeuvres at the same rate as the year before. The issue of the camp on the surrendered (but unsold) northeastern corner was more controversial. While the rental issue would undoubtedly be taken up by DIA officials in Ottawa, the Indian Agent personally believed that the \$1000 paid the previous year was insufficient considering the impact of the occupation. The land was being “cut up” with sewers and trenches, several buildings had been erected in 1915 and seven more were planned for 1916. “Now that it has been cut up so,” Fleetham believed, “it will not be fit for anything else than a Military Camp.” He now privately advocated an arrangement which would see the Militia Department “purchase the Western portion at the prices originally estimated.”⁷⁴

Authorities in the Militia Department were forced to grapple with the nebulous issue of a rental increase. DIA asked the military officials to come up with a new rental offer, but clearly the militia was unclear as to the lines of authority.⁷⁵ Fleetham wanted the rent to be double that of the previous year, and given that the camp surface track had already been laid he informed his superiors that the military must have agreed.⁷⁶ This presumption was ill-founded. The military did not concur in his assessment of the situation. One district officer informed the Militia Council:

[Fleetham's] statement as to the land being cut up with sewers, roads, trenches, etc., is not absolutely correct, as no sewers have been put in this ground. The existing drain, which was in the Camp, has only been cleaned and improved. The roads themselves should be an improvement to the property. Any other ditches, etc., have been placed with a view to draining

⁷³ Memorandum, DGES to MGO, 8 April 1916; Private Letter, DGES (Brev. Colonel G.S. Maunsell), HQ, to Cruikshank, 11 April 1916; Letter, Cruikshank to Maunsell, 17 April 1916; Memorandum, DGES to APMG, 26 April 1916, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File 67-44-1, Vol. 2.

⁷⁴ Letter, Fleetham to Cruikshank, 26 April 1916; Letter, GOC MD 13 to Secy, Militia Council, 27 April 1916, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1. Letter, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 22 April 1916, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

⁷⁵ Letter, AD&S, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 29 April 1916; Letter, Asst. DM, DMD, to Secy, DIA, 8 May 1916; Letter, QMG to GOC MD 13, 12 May 1916, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

⁷⁶ Telegram, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 22 May 1916, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

the land and consequently improving it. These could easily be filled in if desired.⁷⁷

In light of the conflicting interpretations of the situation, the Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence asked that the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to re-evaluate. If the latter felt the previous year's rental was still insufficient an increase would be considered. All that the Deputy Minister asked was that Scott "protect this Department against any unreasonable demand by, or on behalf of, the Indians."⁷⁸

The military obviously had an imperfect grasp of the complex situation. Since the northeast portion of the reserve had been surrendered by the Indians, the Indian Agent informed local military officials that the Sarcee had "no further control" of the land. Nevertheless, the military could not understand why, in light of the Sarcee Indians' expressed willingness to allow the military the use of their reserve on the same grounds as the year before, they were facing difficulties.⁷⁹ They failed to grasp the salient change in responsibilities. Once the land had been surrendered to the Crown in trust, the property was to be managed, leased and sold as the Governor-in-Council directed (in accordance with conditions of the surrender). Of course, the bulk of decision-making would rest with Indian Affairs officials. The Sarcee Band itself would no longer exercise direct control over the use of the northeast corner of the reserve. If the military wanted access or rights to unsurrendered portions it would have to deal with the Band and the DIA. If it wanted similar privileges on the surrendered lands it would have to reach an arrangement with the DIA alone. Perhaps surprisingly, the latter agreements proved more difficult to secure.⁸⁰

At this stage, the military's appeal to the Deputy Superintendent General appeared to achieve its desired result. On 30 May 1916, Scott replied that "in view of the representations made and on the understanding that when your Department ceases to use

⁷⁷ Letter, DSA, MD 13, to Secy, Militia Council, 20 May 1916, *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Letter, DM, DMD, to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 27 May 1916, *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Letter, Fleetham to Lt.-Col. May, 10 May 1916; Letter, DSA, MD 13, to Secy, Militia Council, 20 May 1916, *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ R.S.C. 1906, c. 81, sections 47-57, in "Indian Acts and Amendments (1868-1950), 107-8. The distinction between reserve land tenure and surrendered reserve land tenure, as well as some of the associated legal complexities, are discussed in Henderson, "Land Tenure in Indian Reserves," Chapter III:

this land any ditches or other excavations on the land will be filled in, leaving the property as far as possible in its original condition," Indian Affairs would accept a rental of \$1000 for the present year.⁸¹ As events unfolded, however, this arrangement was little more than an illusion of victory for military officials.

Indian Agent Fleetham refused to relinquish the rental issue. In early August he appealed to Scott, stating unequivocally that he did not think the Indians were getting a "square deal." He reiterated that tremendous damage was being done to the land; grading the roads with hundreds of loads of stone and gravel was not an improvement to the property but "a serious matter" that had to be taken into account when determining payments. Fleetham was convinced that the property would not bring in one-third of the original estimate if it were put up for sale, a reality that "would be quite unfair to the Indians." In light of the original surrender agreement with the Sarcee, the agent contended, every delay had a deleterious impact on the relations between the government and the Band:

The Indians claim and rightly, that on surrendering the land they were to have full rations for all time, but as the land has not been sold, I have told them they must wait until it is disposed of, there was some delay after it was subdivided, and the war coming on of course stopped all chances of it being sold, but as this land is to be disposed of for their benefit I think some action should be taken at once on their behalf, the land now being so broken up will not be fit for any other purpose than its present use.

The Department had advanced \$60,000 to the Sarcee upon surrender, and the Indian Agent felt the rental should at least cover all of the interest on the loan the department had taken out to make this payment. Fleetham again advised that, as it was likely that a permanent camp would be maintained there, the Deputy Superintendent General should personally encourage the Militia Department to purchase the whole acreage at the original estimate; they were practically using all 1083.71 acres anyway. The first step he suggested in that direction would be having the two departments appoint a board of inquiry to look into the matter and report.⁸²

Surrendered Lands, 67-70. A somewhat dated and brief overview of Federal legislative power over Indian lands is provided in "Indian Lands," INAC, THRC, O-31.

⁸¹ Letter, DSGIA to Secy, Militia Council, 30 May 1916, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

⁸² Letter, Fleetham to DSGIA, 3 August 1916, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

Fleetham swayed opinion in Indians Affairs, and the authorities in Ottawa promptly cancelled all previous deals with the military. This was possible, in part, because DMD had been negligent in paying the rental for 1916 and had yet to re-survey the land. The military's failure to meet the "reasonable conditions imposed" by the DIA "for the privilege of using the portion of the reserve referred to for training of Militia ... compelled [Indian Affairs] to cancel the understanding arrived at with a view to some better understanding in order to satisfy the claims of the Indians."⁸³ The DMD, taken aback by this dramatic change in tone, could only reply that any negligence was inadvertent and that it would look into matters and report back.⁸⁴

Internally, the military tried to determine where the situation had gone out of control. Upon evaluation, officials realized they had overlooked the whole issue of re-surveying the land and forgotten to pay rent for 1916. Indian Affairs was forthcoming with several options. First, it forwarded Fleetham's suggestion that a Board be appointed consisting of General Cruikshank, the Camp Engineer, Inspector Markle, and the Indian Agent himself to thoroughly explore the matter. Second, it asked the DMD to consider the possibility of purchasing the property from the Indians at the original upset price (the supposedly confidential minimum price acceptable according to the terms of surrender); DIA thought that this "might be the best way of settling the difficulty."⁸⁵

In light of Indian Affairs' position, the Director General Engineering Services (DGES) deemed the appointment of a board of enquiry "not only the most direct" course of action "but in the end the most satisfactory means of reaching a conclusion." A mandate was established for the board "to investigate existing conditions and to report and advise upon course of procedure with a view to solving the difficulty which ha[d] arisen between the Department of Indian Affairs, and the Department of Militia and Defence in regard to the above mentioned Camp Area." The military wanted to secure

⁸³ Letter, AD&S, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 10 August 1916, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

⁸⁴ Letters, Acting DM, DMD, to DM, DIA, 12 and 14 August 1916, *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Memorandum to DM, DMD, 12 August 1916, re: Sarcee Camp; Letter, Assistant Deputy and Secy, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 17 August 1916, *Ibid.*

use of the land, while DIA desired to obtain “satisfactory value for the Indians” through either lease or sale of the reserve land.⁸⁶ A resolution was needed.

The Board of Enquiry convened on Monday, 16 October at Sarcee Camp. In view of the \$60,000 that DIA had advanced to the Sarcee in 1913, and the three percent annual interest charge, the Board recommended that the DMD pay \$1800 as rental for the fiscal year ending 31 March 1917, for the portion of the reserve used for camp purposes.⁸⁷ Officials in Ottawa now had to be convinced that this agreement was acceptable.

It was a tough sell at Militia and Defence Headquarters in Ottawa, in large part due to misconceptions about what was involved. The Master General of Ordnance was not convinced that Indian Affairs was stating its case fairly, and worried that the interest on the expenditure claimed by DIA did not apply in its entirety to the land occupied by the Militia. His office, obviously oblivious to the intricacies of Band ownership of reserve land, believed that because there was no Indian occupancy of that portion of land at the time the camp was established, the DMD should not be responsible for paying money to be distributed throughout the entire reserve. This position, the MGO believed, should be maintained, especially in light of DIA’s previous willingness to accept a \$1000 sum for 1916 rent.⁸⁸ Such apparent logic was misguided. The Band owned all of the reserve land communally, so distinguishing between members along the lines suggested was unworkable. With clarification the MGO acknowledged the mistake and in late October a submission was prepared for the Militia Council which accepted the recommendations of the Board and the payment of \$1800 annual rent.⁸⁹

The response in Indian Affairs to the meeting was markedly different. The reports by Inspector Markle [see appendix C-1] and Indian Agent Fleetham [see appendix C-2] bore remarkable resemblance and the two officials concurred on several salient points.

⁸⁶ Memorandum & marginalia, DW&B for DGES to MGO, 30 August 1916; Letter, DM, DMD, to Secy, DIA, 6 September 1916; Letter, Adjutant General, DMD, to GOC MD 13, 7 September 1916; Letter, Asst Deputy and Secy, DIA to Secy, Militia Council, 20 September 1916, *Ibid.* NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1. Letter, AS&D, DIA, to Markle, Inspector of Indian Agencies, Red Deer, 20 September 1916, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

⁸⁷ Proceedings of a Board of Enquiry, Sarcee Camp, 16 October 1916, INAC, Indian Lands Registry, Sarcee Indian Reserve No. 145.

⁸⁸ Letter, MGO to GOC MD 13, 31 October 1913, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

⁸⁹ Submission to Militia Council by MGO, 27 October 1913; Memorandum, DW&B for DGES to MGO, 27 October 1916, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

Both found it unlikely that the DMD would be willing to incur the significant expense that would be needed to return the land to its pre-war state, and both believed that any other scenario would amount to an abrogation of the surrender agreement reached with the Sarcee. The removal of gravel had not only upset the site but meant that the Militia would be called upon to pay more compensation. Both concluded that the most advantageous option for the Sarcee and the DIA would be to transfer the land to the Militia Department on terms that would be fair to the Indians - about \$150,000. Since Markle and Fleetham agreed in their professional assessments of the situation, Indian Affairs pursued the direction advocated by its regional representatives with confidence. On 9 November 1916 the Deputy Superintendent General wrote to his counterparts at Militia and Defence with a view to encouraging a transfer agreement. Citing figures provided by the chief engineer at Sarcee Camp, Scott suggested that the DMD was responsible for providing compensation for large amounts of gravel (12,426 cubic yards) removed from the site. At twenty-five cents a yard (the payment amount suggested by the Indian Agent), this compensation would total more than three thousand dollars. With this in mind, he turned to the possibility of a land sale "on fair and equitable terms." Given the circumstances, Scott reasoned, the question of purchase might be more advantageous at present, and he suggested that Cruikshank be given the authority to discuss the matter with Fleetham in hopes of a satisfactory arrangement.⁹⁰

The Calgary *Herald* put the issue in the public domain. It reiterated "rumours" that the militia was ready to offer \$50 per acre for the Sarcee Camp grounds:

Although the hope is expressed on all hands that the war may be over before next summer it is felt that there should be a permanent camp attached to military district No. 13. In the past the carrying out of training in connection with the militia at temporary camps has been most unsatisfactory.... In some quarters it is considered that there will be very great impetus given to military training after the war is over and for this reason it is strongly urged that a permanent camp should be procured.

The newspaper asserted that the sale of the "comparatively small piece of the reserve" would not make "any material difference to the Indians," particularly because of the distance between the village and the camp. The transfer would, however, dramatically

⁹⁰ Letter, DSGIA to Militia Council, 9 November 1916, *Ibid.*

help the military. With this in mind, and reports that the two departments were already discussing the matter, the *Herald* stated that “it would not come as a surprise if it were announced that a satisfactory arrangement had been arrived at.”⁹¹ When Indian Agent Fleetham read the article and reported to Ottawa, he was somewhat obtuse. Brigadier-General Cruikshank had proposed the \$50/acre figure on the basis of farm land, but Fleetham stressed that the land adjoined the City and prices would invariably jump “three or four years after the war.” So long as the land was sold for more than \$120,000 he did not seem to oppose the prospect of a sale, but he reminded his supervisors in Ottawa to keep one important factor in mind: the Indians were wards of the Government, and “we promised to look after their interests.” He had personally made promises to the Sarcee at the time of surrender, and wanted “to show the Indians we have kept our word.”⁹²

The Militia Department seriously considered the proposal, but did not proceed with the terms reported in the *Herald*. As early as August militia authorities had begun to discuss the advisability of purchasing rather than leasing the site in light of the militia’s short and long-term requirements. Cruikshank now provided detailed plans to DMD Headquarters on the camp site property. If the value of the property was at one time nearly \$200,000, the GOC did not anticipate the current value was much more than the \$60,000 advanced to the Indians by DIA. This stated, the Department had to consider the amount of money that had been spent to fit up the Camp: \$65,055 in 1914-15 and another \$43,717 the following year, nearly \$110,000 in total.⁹³ There were other considerations that detracted from the desirability of purchasing the site in the minds of Headquarters’ staff.

Two main factors convinced the DGES in Ottawa that the Sarcee acreage should not be obtained. First, and perhaps foremost, the DMD was uncertain as to whether Calgary would continue to be a major training centre in Alberta. The Department controlled sixty-nine thousand acres in the vicinity of Medicine Hat which had been

⁹¹ *Calgary Herald*, 1 December 1916, 9. In an editorial the next day, the newspaper stressed that making Sarcee Camp permanent was “the only logical thing” that the DMD could do, given that the training facility was “ready made, and with a railway line running right to its gates.” 2 December 1916, 6.

⁹² Letter, Fleetham to Secy, DIA, 4 December 1916, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

⁹³ Memorandum to DM, DMD, 12 August 1916; Letter, GOC MD 13, to Secy, Militia Council, 10 November 1916; Handwritten note to file, n.d. (December 1916), NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

reserved for a Training Camp and Re-mount Depot for the province. The Medicine Hat land was currently under ten-year lease to the National Live Stock Exchange but the DMD was considering cancelling the lease.⁹⁴ If the Department intended to eventually adopt the Medicine Hat site for training purposes, there was no apparent need to purchase the Sarcee Reserve land. Second, the DGES reminded senior officials that “the Sarcee Reserve is practically within the environs of the City of Calgary, and that no doubt in a few years hence, in the course of its expansion, the city will want this land, and we may be forced to cede it [to the municipality].” His recommendations reflected these concerns:

It would, therefore, seem preferable not to purchase the camp site on the Sarcee Indian Reserve, but rather to continue renting it. It is true that we would thereby lose the opportunity of realizing on any enhancement in the value of the property in the future. We would, in addition, incur the expense of restoring this land, as far as possible, to its original condition. Against this, if the Department of Indian Affairs will agree to a fixed rental of \$1800.00 a year we would be securing control of the property for a low figure, the rental named being 3% of its present value ... as estimated by the General Officer Commanding the District. Whereas, in order to purchase at that figure it would cost the Government 5% to provide the money required.

Whether the Department bought the property and then (perhaps within a short period) had to sell it again, or whether it rented some of the land for a few years, it would still lose most of the money spent in fitting up the Camp.⁹⁵ As a result, on 21 December the Militia Council approved a submission by the MGO that recommended against the purchase of the Sarcee property.

The Militia had not abandoned the site, but only abandoned the prospect of an expensive purchase. Just prior to year's end Cruikshank was informed that his recommendation had been accepted to offer \$1800 rent per annum for the site so long as it was required for military purposes. In March 1917 the rental costs were duly paid and

⁹⁴ Memorandum, DGES to MGO, 5 December 1916, *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Memorandum, DGES to MGO, 5 December 1916, *Ibid.*

Indian Affairs was made aware that authority had been granted to conclude similar arrangements that year.⁹⁶

Despite DMD's unwillingness to purchase the site as DIA had hoped, the military tried to obtain insurance that the property would not be sold while still required for wartime purposes. The Minister's private secretary passed along rumours that a large portion of the Sarcee Reserve would be put on the market at an early date, and asked the Deputy Minister to contact Indian Affairs to ensure that the military's needs were not impinged upon. "In view of the heavy financial demands of this Government consequent of the war," the senior DMD administrator pleaded:

and the urgent necessity for the upkeep and management of our Troops in Canada and Overseas, it is not possible, at present, to favourably consider the proposal to purchase this property.

In view, however, of the fact that a considerable sum of money has been spent on this area (1650 acres), and it is considerably well adapted for training troops, I am directed to suggest that your Department might see fit to retain it for our use under present conditions of rental during the period of the war.⁹⁷

The Deputy Superintendent General was accommodating in his response, stating that the DIA would "meet as far as it possibly can your views in regard to holding this land from sale during the period of the war, but on the express understanding that the rental will be promptly paid for the benefit of the Indians." He then asked for prompt payment of the rental for 1917.⁹⁸

If in the past the Militia had been negligent in paying its rentals, the perceived threat of losing the land prompted a change in attitude. In light of the situation, the Militia Council immediately passed the requisite authority to provide payment for the following year. Indian Affairs had the cheque a few weeks later. In upcoming years, the

⁹⁶ Submission to Militia Council by MGO and Marginalia on cover sheet, 15 December 1916; Letter, QMG to GOC MD 13, 30 December 1916; Letter, Asst Deputy and Secy, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 17 March 1917; Letter and Marginalia, A&PMG to ADM, DMD, 23 March 1917; Letter, Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 15 May 1917; Letter, DGW&B to MGO, 22 May 1917; Submission to Militia Council by MGO, 25 May 1917, *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Letter, Major Bristol, Private Secretary to the Minister, to DM, DMD; Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, 19 May 1917, *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Letter, DSGIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 29 May 1917, *Ibid.*

DMD made sure that annual rent payments were made early to ensure a continuity of training.⁹⁹

The military trained at Sarcee Camp through the end of the war. The site was a resounding success. From 1915-18, it is rumoured that more men passed through Sarcee Mobilization Camp than another other military facility in Canada except Valcartier. In 1916 alone more than 21,000 men had trained in Calgary. The northeast portion of the reserve grew from an uninhabited stretch of the prairie landscape to a veritable tented city that could accommodate up to 15,000 soldiers at a time. Local entrepreneurs extended the street railway to the camp boundary, while others erected a ramshackle town of wooden buildings ("Sarcee City") just inside Calgary limits to provide the residents with 'creature comforts.' It was a remarkable transformation.¹⁰⁰

With the return to peace in November 1918, Canadian military authorities were faced with the daunting task of deciding what to do with a bloated army and its wartime structure. A slow reorganization of the permanent force and non-permanent active militia (NPAM) followed the cessation of hostilities. With the exigencies of war behind them, military authorities were able to shift their attention towards planning for peacetime training. The lessons of the First World War, which confirmed that pre-war professional armies were overwhelmed by masses of conscript soldiers, spoke to the need for a much large military establishment than before the war. Gwatkin, the CGS, concluded that the heart and soul of Canada's defences should be provided by a revitalized militia trained by a core of competent permanent force personnel. With this in mind, he recommended the construction of several permanent military areas large enough to accommodate full-scale divisional manoeuvres.¹⁰¹

In Calgary, neither the DIA nor the DMD was anxious to disrupt the existing arrangement that had developed during the war. Indian Commissioner W.M. Graham

⁹⁹ Report of Militia Council on Purport of Submission by Master General of Ordnance, Meeting held on May 30, 1917; Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, 18 June 1917, *Ibid.* On subsequent years, see Letter, W.A. Orr, Lands & Timber Branch, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 6 June 1918; Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Secy, DIA, 24 June 1918; Letter, Asst Deputy and Secy, DIA, to DM, DMD, 12 June 1919; Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Secy, DIA, 28 June 1919, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Dempsey, *Calgary: Spirit of the West*, 104-7; Cuncliffe, *Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki*, 22-23; Handwritten notes, "Sarcee Camp," Glenbow Museum, Barry Agnew Fonds.

¹⁰¹ Harris, *Canadian Brass*, 142-3.

visited Sarcee Agency in November 1920 and stressed to D.C. Scott that he hoped the matter of the lease with the Militia Department would remain constant. If portions of the land were cut off from the parcel covered by the lease held by the DMD, Graham stated, the Department "could not begin to get the same amount of money per acre that we are now receiving from the Militia Department."¹⁰² Although the status of military training at Sarcee was uncertain in the early postwar period, the military continued to utilize the site according to the terms of the established leasing arrangements. In 1919, for example, when the matter of the lease came up for approval, the Director of Engineering Services recommended that the rental be paid for the upcoming year given the large expenditures incurred in setting up this camp, and that the site continue to be leased until another training area became available.¹⁰³ Subsequent developments revealed that DMD would not seek an alternate training site and instead sought to solidify its occupation at Sarcee.

In December 1920, military officials again pondered the future of Sarcee Camp. Brigadier General A.H. Bell, the GOC of the Military District since late 1919, planned to repair and move certain buildings at the camp and inquired as to the tenure of the property. Not only was Bell convinced that Sarcee was "admirably suited for a Militia Training area" due to its convenient location and large number of semi-permanent buildings; a representative of the Air Board (Forestry Branch) visited the property with a view to selecting an aerodrome site. The response from headquarters reiterated previous arrangements and suggested that the present agreement would continue until Indian Affairs could make "better financial arrangements for the use of the property." The question of the future use of the Reserve was on the military's agenda in Ottawa, which would in turn decide the fate of annual military training in Calgary.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Letter, Indian Commissioner, Regina, to DSGIA, 1 December 1920, INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

¹⁰³ Memorandum, D.E.S. to MGO, 16 June 1919, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Letter, GOC MD 13, to Secy, Militia Council, Attention Engineer Branch, 6 December 1920; Letter, Colonel S.H. Osler, for DES for MGO, to GOC MD 13, 27 December 1920, RG 24, Vol. 6325, File 67-44-1, vol. 2. Similar correspondence had been passed just previously to similar ends. In November, the DES wanted to settle whether or not the Militia would continue to use Sarcee Reserve as a camp ground. Before a large expenditure was made to put the camp in "good condition," the Department needed to know how long it would be retained. "Until another area, suitable for a training ground is selected," Brigadier General Andrew McNaughton replied, "it will be necessary to continue the use of Sarcee. Under the circumstances I do not consider that any extensive repairs or improvements are warranted." The MGO concurred with this

Fortunately for those who advocated a continued presence at Sarcee, senior military officials seemed intent on brokering a more substantive deal than provided for in existing arrangements. The Chief of the General Staff inspected Sarcee Camp in 1920 and was satisfied that it was “a desirable location for a central camp in Alberta.” An interesting proposal was drummed up in Militia Headquarters. DIA was desirous of selling this area, and the DMD was willing to part with the military reserve near Medicine Hat on which the Department of Soldiers’ Civil Re-Establishment (DSCR) might be able to settle returned soldiers. Brigadier Andrew McNaughton wondered, “Cannot something be done to put through this three-cornered deal?”¹⁰⁵ It was a creative suggestion, but nothing could be done. The DSCR and Soldier Settlement Board stated they would not purchase land to exchange for the Medicine Hat Military Reserve because the rainfall in that district was uncertain and they would not encourage soldiers to settle on land in that vicinity. The conclusion seemed to be, once again, that if DMD wanted to retain Sarcee Camp as a permanent training ground it would have to be purchased. The \$172,317 that had been spent fitting the camp for CEF training meant that there was plenty of “equipment” that could be used for militia training, but under existing conditions there was no assurance that the camp would be in use for any extended period. “As it is understood that the demand for land in Western Canada is not great at present,” one official suggested, “it may be an opportune time to make up the question of the purchase of this camp.”¹⁰⁶

Indeed, the time seemed right for the military to purchase the land. Although the cost would “in all probability considerably exceed” the \$60,000 sum that DIA advanced to the Indians, the MGO was prepared to recommend:

in order that a large amount of money expended by this Department on the training area should not be wasted, the Department of Indian Affairs be requested to put a price on the property while land in that vicinity is comparatively cheap. If this Department cannot finance the deal during the present year possibly an arrangement might be entered into by which this Department would obtain an option on the property and continue the

position. Letter, Colonel J. Houlston, DES, to MGO, M & D, 26 November 1920; Memorandum, BGen McNaughton for CGS to MGO, 1 December 1920, RG 24, Vol. 359, File HQ 33-24-146.

¹⁰⁵ Letter, Brigadier-General Andrew McNaughton for CGS, to MGO, 18 December 1920, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6612, File HQ 8340-1-2 Pt. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum, D.E.S. to MGO, 11 January 1921, *Ibid.*

lease for a definite period until the purchase can be financed. A possible alternative would be that this Department could purchase the area and hold it by paying the interest on the purchase price until such time as the property can be paid for in full.

Given that current lease payments were equal to interest payments on DIA's loan, MGO argued, this was ostensibly the situation the DMD was in at present anyway. The CGS was anxious to proceed.¹⁰⁷

The Militia Department contacted Indian Affairs once again about the possibility of purchasing a portion of Sarcee Reserve. Although they were content with the lease, if the property was to be sold the Minister of Militia and Defence wanted to know the valuation on the property. The Deputy Superintendent General at Indian Affairs would not entertain this discussion. The Department had "no present intention of selling this property, but would consider renewing the lease from time to time."¹⁰⁸ If the military could not purchase the land outright, it still sought stability and reassurance that the training ground would remain viable beyond the annual arrangements of the previous decade.

The issue of a multiyear lease was resurrected. Militia officials explained to their government counterparts at DIA that considerable expenditures were needed to refit and preserve Sarcee Camp during the coming year. This stated, they wanted to know for "what period the lease of this property can reasonably be expected, for Military purposes," so as to justify the requisite allocation of resources. Indian Affairs officials, who were traditionally opposed to any such arrangement, now seemed amenable to the suggestion. "In the interests of the Indians," Duncan Campbell Scott stated, a modest increase of rent would only be fair if a lease was given for a definite period. He proposed a ten-year, renewable lease at a rate of \$2,000 per annum. Under the circumstances he trusted these terms were reasonable, and senior officials at DMD concurred.¹⁰⁹ It was

¹⁰⁷ Memorandum, MGO to CGS, 19 January 1921; Memorandum, DMO for CGS, to DM, 21 January 1921, Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, 26 January 1921; Letter, Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, to Deputy Minister, DMD, 8 February 1921, Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, 15 February 1921; Letter, Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, to Deputy Minister, DMD, 21 February 1921; Memorandum and marginalia, Colonel S.H. Osler, R.C.E. for DES to MGO, 25 February 1921, Ibid.

agreed that the camp site would include all of the surrendered area northeast of the Elbow River so that no fence would be required, and DIA drew up the formal indenture.¹¹⁰

On 23 March 1921, the Departments of Militia and Defence and Indian Affairs entered into a ten-year lease for the use of the surrendered portion of Sarcee Reserve.¹¹¹ The relationship embodied in this document was a pervasive one. In the next few years a formal leasing arrangement was reached with the Sarcee for artillery firing rights over additional Reserve land, further establishing the military's presence. Although the two departments squabbled over grazing privileges and other minor issues, the 1921 lease normalized their relationship. Annual rent payments were made promptly and in advance of the training season, new buildings were constructed at the camp, and the militia conducted annual training without precipitating any serious misunderstandings between the departments or with the Sarcee Band. In 1931, and again in 1941, the lease was renewed with the same terms.¹¹² It was not until the late 1940s that the military sought substantive changes to the arrangement, compelled to do so by the presence of Currie Barracks and an increasing military commitment at Calgary.¹¹³

A number of salient considerations and contexts influenced the pace of negotiations and the nature of agreements reached between the Sarcee Band, the DIA, and the military in the period to 1921. The land boom in Calgary, and the "speculative zeal" that climaxed in 1912, initially placed the City and the militia in competition for Sarcee Reserve land and rendered arrangements between the military and Indian Affairs uncertain and unstable. When a surrender was finally achieved, local DIA officials placed a low premium on the military's needs in light of the desire for a sale of surrendered land. The onset of war had a dramatic impact on land prices and the potential for sale of the northeastern corner of the reserve, and the military acquired use of surrendered and unsurrendered portions for the duration of the war. It was not until the war was over that a multiyear lease could be reached. Certainly various individual

¹¹⁰ Letter, Deputy Minister, DMD, to Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, 4 March 1921; Letter, MGO to GOC MD 13, 9 March 1921; Letter, Asst Deputy & Secy, DIA, to Secy, Militia Council, 23 March 1921; Memorandum and marginalia, DES to MGO, 8 April 1921, *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² See NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6324, File HQ 67-32-17; Vol. 6325, File 67-44-1 vols. 2-3;

¹¹³ Ruth Banting, Historical Research Report, "Sarcee Indian Reserve No. 145," DND, DGPU (December 1975), 3-4, copy at the Museum of the Regiments.

personalities influenced negotiations, but the structure of the federal government determined the structure of negotiations.

The interplay between the federal departments of Indian Affairs and Militia and Defence demonstrated the fallacy of treating government as a monolithic entity. The relationship between the two departments was hostile or cooperative depending upon the perception of interests being served. Although Band opposition originally prevented military use of Sarcee land, it was the DIA who discarded the 1912 agreement when an arrangement was finally reached between the Band and the military. Indian Affairs officials saw themselves as guardians of the Indians, as administrators of resources, and as the brokers of deals that would serve both Band and departmental interests. The military assessed its own needs and negotiated accordingly, its future designs and plans for the Sarcee lands often at odds with prevailing visions in the DIA. Within the federal layer of government, the different departments competed and converged with one another depending on the situation. When multiple layers of government were involved in military development plans, negotiations could be even more tenuous and bitter.

CHAPTER THREE

ARDUOUS DESTINY:

THE CITY AND THE ARMOURY SITE SELECTION PROCESS, 1907-17

The construction of a network of drill halls and armouries was a key component of Canadian militia reform in the early twentieth century. It was the age of the "citizen soldier;" of attempts to create a modern, civilian army out of weekend militiamen. Ottawa decision-makers felt that a sense of identity and *esprit de corps* in the militia would be strengthened by the construction of permanent drill halls for the militia, featuring rifle ranges, armouries for the storage of weapons and equipment, lecture halls, recreation and mess rooms, and in some cases even basement bowling alleys. These drill halls would not differ greatly in appearance from those constructed in the 1880s and 1890s; there would just be more of them across the country. In 1908 the Department of Militia and Defence (DMD) estimated that over three hundred and fifty new buildings would be required. Although this lofty goal was never met, approximately one hundred new drill halls were completed between 1900 and 1918.¹ In communities across the dominion, the military had a greater physical presence than ever before.

If the twentieth century was to belong to Canada, as Laurier envisioned, the Dominion would share in the grandeur of the British Empire and at the same time be able to stand on its own feet. In military terms, there was optimism in the air when the Canadians returned from the war in South Africa; but this sentiment was coupled with uncertainty following the withdrawal of the last few imperial garrison forces from Canada. Military and political leaders believed that the country's pervasive "militia myth" held the answer to the question of what form Canada's defences should take. This required a commitment by citizens in the cities, towns and villages across the country.

¹ Janet Wright, *Crown Assets: The Architecture of the Department of Public Works, 1867-1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 95; Carmen Miller, "Sir Frederick William Borden and Militia Reform, 1896-1911," *Canadian Historical Review* 50/3 (September 1969), 265-84. Note on terminology: the terms "drill hall" and "armoury" are used interchangeably in this thesis as they were both used in the debate to discuss the same proposed facility in Calgary. Armouries are depots for the storage of weapons and equipment, while drill halls are more extensive structures featuring rifle ranges and rooms for the militia. Current parlance refers to the Calgary building as Mewata Armouries or Armoury.

“Calgarians were not warlike by inclination,” Hugh Dempsey has explained, “but there were enough ex-imperial soldiers and mounted policemen around that the idea of having a militia army appealed to them.” Calgary was home to a number of men who had served in the Alberta Field Force of 1885 and also to veterans of the Boer War; furthermore, “cowboys and ranchers were naturally drawn to cavalry units.”² Already a fledgling military identity was developing in the Western outpost.

The positive relationship between Calgary and the local military was fostered in a number of ways. The military had strong connections with community leaders like Colonel James Walker, whose estate was used for a cavalry summer camp as early as 1903. On 14 January 1904, when a two-storey drill hall was officially opened on 12th Avenue S.W. at Centre Street, the accompanying military ball was attended by the leading citizens of the town. According to a local newspaper, “there was sound of revelry by night and bright lights shone o’er fair women and brave men.”³ Mounted competitions between the NWMP and the local squadron of the Canadian Mounted Rifles attracted interest at every Calgary exhibition held at Victoria Park. The militia also used the exhibition grounds to hold summer camps. Calgary cavalymen and cadets featured prominently in local parades, and militia bands performed at community functions like the opening of the new YMCA in 1907. On occasion, members of the 15th Light Horse (as “G” squadron came to be known in 1905) even helped to track down escaped convicts and fight fires.⁴ While it is difficult to assess community sentiments regarding the military in days before opinion polls, the relationship between Calgarians and the local militia seemed overwhelmingly cordial.

As Calgary’s militia grew during the first decade of the century, the City’s military force was tasked with growing responsibility. With the organization of Military District Number 13 in 1907, the local militia felt that the small drill hall no longer provided the requisite space nor adequately symbolized the growing status of the City’s

² Hugh A. Dempsey, *Calgary: Spirit of the West* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1994), 103. See also Dick Cunliffe, *Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki* (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975) and Jack Dunn, *The Alberta Field Force of 1885* (Calgary: Jack Dunn, 1994).

³ Quoted in Dick Cunliffe, “Calgary - A Military History, 1885-1914,” *The Roundup*, undated article in history files at the Museum of the Regiments.

⁴ Cunliffe, *Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki*, 10-11.

military force. The existing structure had been built from private funds on land purchased for that purpose. The next drill hall would be federally funded on land donated by the city.⁵

In October 1907, the City and the military began to negotiate the erection of a more suitable drill hall. Calgary City Council passed a resolution offering five lots of the Alexander Estate (the site of an old isolation hospital on the outskirts of Calgary) to the federal government, free of charge, for the proposed militia facility.⁶ Over the next several years the militia and the city passed correspondence back and forth on the subject but made little tangible headway. The DMD was willing to erect a large building and accompanying parade grounds on the property, but it did not act on the matter. In 1910, when the Militia Estimates recommended construction of a drill hall for the use of the local corps, the District Officer Commanding (DOC), Lieutenant-Colonel E.A. Cruikshank wanted to know whether the old hospital site or an alternative was still available. The response was both confused and disappointing. First the City suggested several alternate sites, but Cruikshank found these too small and confining because of the need for “sufficient space outside the armoury for the troops to parade and ample room for future enlargement of the building.” Attention then focused back on the Alexandra Estate site to which the City continued to hold title, and the mayor sealed an agreement with the Exhibition Board that would allow the military to use a select part of Victoria Park for parade grounds. City Council was evidently anxious to have a drill hall built to accommodate the local militiamen as soon as possible, but now the military wavered on the offer that had been made.⁷

In the District Engineer’s annual report for 1910, a grander scheme was hatched. Major Cary reported that the absence of permanent buildings in Calgary meant that existing facilities were paltry and inadequate. The Ordnance stores were temporarily

⁵ Cunniffe, *Scarlet, Riflegreen and Khaki*, 3-11.

⁶ Letter, City Clerk to Col. S.B. Steele, DOC MD 13, 22 October 1907; Letter, Colonel S.B. Steele to H.E. Gillis, City Clerk, 23 October 1907, City of Calgary Archives (CCA), CCA, RG 26: City Clerk’s (1887-1945), Series I [hereafter RG 26], Box 51, File #412.

⁷ Letter, Cruikshank to Mayor, 21 July 1910; Letter, Cruikshank to Chairman, City Commissioners, 9 September 1910; Letter, Cruikshank to W.D. Spence, City Clerk, 13 December 1910; Letter, Mayor to Cruikshank, 6 January 1911; Letter, Cruikshank to Mayor, 7 January 1911, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File

housed in the Industrial School property (the site that the militia had acquired and subsequently deemed unsuitable for a permanent training camp), the Headquarters offices in a small rented house, and the present armoury was so small and unmemorable that the officer did not see fit to even mention it. "As a matter of policy and in the interests of efficiency and economy," the District Engineer suggested that the Militia should concentrate all of the H.Q. offices, Ordnance offices and stores, an armoury and a Drill Hall in one building or group of buildings "in a good situation in the centre of the Town." This approach would have several important benefits:

not only will greater convenience of administration be obtained, but a finer building or group of buildings can be designed giving a claim on the City for a better site than the city authorities might care to give for an Armoury alone. Several sites have been suggested for presentation by the City, but it is usually the case that the local authorities prefer to give a site whose value varies directly as the value of the buildings to be erected thereon.

Major General Colin Mackenzie, the CGS, agreed that this was "obviously" the best approach.⁸

The local press saw matters in a political light. On 3 August 1911, the DOC informed the Mayor that the DMD had finally made a decision to go ahead with the hospital site.⁹ Two weeks later the militia department commissioned Major Carey of Winnipeg to make the necessary arrangements and hasten construction of an armoury building on this site. He toured the site and looked over plans of an impressive \$150,000 armoury building with the city engineer. The Conservative *Calgary News-Telegram* felt it "somewhat surprising" that the major had "suddenly appeared in the city" with instructions to make arrangements for immediate construction, and set the major's presence in the context of the pending federal election. This expediency, the newspaper argued,

#412. See also "Extracts from Minutes of Council, City of Calgary," CCA, RG 26, Box 60, File #483, City Solicitor's Correspondence, A-B, 1913.

⁸ "General Report: Calgary," District Engineer MDs 10 & 13, 28 November 1910; Memorandum, CGS to MGO, 13 January 1911, National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 24, Vol. 6325, File HQ 67-44-1 Vol. 1.

⁹ Letter, Cruikshank to J. Mitchell, Mayor of Calgary, 3 August 1911; Letter, Chairman of Board of Commissions to Cruikshank, 9 August 1910. This selection was confirmed in a letter from E.F. Jarvis, the Acting Deputy Minister of DMD in Ottawa to the Mayor of Calgary, 14 August 1911, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412.

together with the fact that the government has decided to grant the western provinces control of their natural resources, is regarded by the non-partisan and opposition residents of the city to mean that the government is going out of its way to get into the good graces of the Calgary constituents and thus win out at the polls.¹⁰

Politically motivated or not, it appeared as though a deal could finally be realized. Council approved the transfer of the property to the Dominion Government at its meeting on 21 August. The only condition it imposed was that construction be started before 1 July 1912.¹¹ However, the project was delayed yet again. Although the Department of Public Works included an allotment in their 1912-13 Estimates for Calgary drill hall construction, the DOC "hardly thought possible" that plans and specifications could be prepared, tenders invited, a contract let and the work commenced before July, as there were numerous other buildings across Canada "requiring equal attention."¹² The delay and a change of government rendered this agreement moot.

In the federal election of 1911 Robert Borden's Conservatives toppled Laurier's Liberals and the new prime minister appointed Sir Sam Hughes as Canada's fifteenth Minister of Militia and Defence. Hughes was an outspoken advocate of the non-permanent militia ("citizen soldiers") and wasted no time acting on his military philosophy. He immediately suggested ways in which the citizenry and the militia could be brought closer together, and armouries fit nicely into his agenda. As Ronald Haycock explained, Hughes believed that building more drill halls in the smaller militia centres, especially those serving rural battalions, was one way to foster congenial civil-military relations. Another was to find "ways to encourage closer co-operation between municipalities and their local militia units in sharing defence costs." An expanded

¹⁰ Calgary News-Telegram, 16 August 1911. This seems to contradict some local historians who have contended that an armoury was not built because a Liberal government was in power. For example, Jack Peach suggested that the request for a Calgary armoury was "steadfastly ignored" in Ottawa because of the election and Calgary's Conservative-voting tendencies. "No matter how it's spelled, Mewata's an enigma," Calgary Herald, 27 July 1985. The newspapers of the day felt that exactly the opposite was the case.

¹¹ Letter, Mayor to Cruikshank, 22 August 1911, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412; Letter, LCol Cruikshank, DOC, MD 13, to J.W. Mitchell, Mayor of Calgary, re: Armoury Site, Calgary, Alta., 23 August 1911, BoC, Box #46, File: Commissioners' Estimates re: Contracts and Estimates, M-Z, 1913; "Extracts from Minutes of Council, City of Calgary," CCA, RG 26, Box 60, File #483, City Solicitor's Correspondence, A-B, 1913.

¹² Letter, LCol Cruikshank, DOC, MD 13, to Chairman, Board of Commissioners, re: Proposed Armoury Calgary, 3 Feb 1912; Letter, Chairman, Commissioners, to Cruikshank, 6 Feb 1912, BoC, Box #46, File: Commissioners' Estimates re: Contracts and Estimates, M-Z, 1913.

armoury and drill hall program would have a value beyond the military realm. It would stimulate preparedness, encourage local youth training, and, in the words of his Military Secretary, “serve as a public hall, a place of meeting for many local activities not necessarily restricted to members of the militia.”¹³ Even as public revenues declined in 1911, “Drill Hall Sam” demanded more and more money for the militia, boasting that new drill halls would adorn every community.¹⁴ Hughes was so dedicated to the erection of these facilities that he nearly doubled his predecessor’s allotments for construction, buildings, works and engineering services by 1914. This category represented the largest actual increase in military expenditures for 1913-14, even more than ordnance, arms and equipment. His armoury-building program easily won the accolades of imperial Inspector-General Sir Ian Hamilton in his assessment of the Canadian militia in 1913.¹⁵ Another champion of this initiative was the newly elected Conservative member of parliament for Calgary, Richard Bedford Bennett.

Although Bennett was not a Calgarian by birth, he became one of Calgary’s most renowned citizens by adoption. “R.B.,” as he was affectionately known in the West, immigrated to Calgary from the Maritimes after finishing his law degree at Dalhousie in 1893. He first entered politics in 1898 as a Conservative member to the Assembly of the North-West Territories, but failed to win a seat in the 1900 federal election and again missed in his 1905 bid to sit in the newly-formed Alberta legislature. In 1909 the tide of his political fortunes changed and he was elected to the opposition benches in Alberta, one of only two “straight Conservatives” to do so. In Edmonton, Bennett used his intelligence, arrogance and forceful personality to hound the Provincial Liberal Government over railways, a proposed Calgary university and the other partisan issues of the day. He naturally came to the fore as a leader of the opposition, the only provincial member “who could be described as a Conservative in the true party sense.”¹⁶ After the Conservative federal election victory of 1911 he embarked for Ottawa to sit in the House

¹³ Ronald G. Haycock, Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1885-1916 (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 131, 135-6, 140.

¹⁴ Desmond Morton, A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada’s Overseas Ministry in the First World War (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1982), 16, 18.

¹⁵ Haycock, Sam Hughes, 140, 169.

¹⁶ L.G. Thomas, The Liberal Party in Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 28, 69, 145.

as representative for Calgary East. Bennett was the only Conservative amongst the seven sitting members from Alberta elected to Ottawa. Coupled with his past Tory loyalty, this situation gave him influence at the federal level beyond that of most newly-elected MPs. He would try to reward his loyal constituency, "that strong citadel of Conservatism,"¹⁷ wherever possible.

It is not surprising that R.B. saw the armoury as an important addition to the city. Calgary was the fastest growing city in Canada and one of the most rapidly expanding centres in North America at the time Bennett took his seat in the House of Commons. Although his constituency had boasted only 4091 inhabitants in 1901, it had risen dramatically to 43,704 by 1911; an increase of over 950 percent. Land speculation was nearing its peak and city property was growing increasingly scarce and increasingly expensive. Furthermore, in 1911, the first major training camp for southern Alberta was held in Calgary. More than 2000 militia from the city and other Alberta centres converged on Reservoir Park (the eventual site of Currie Barracks) for exercises. Calgary itself was now home to several militia units. However, none of these units had an armoury for winter training and instead rented several buildings scattered across the city and used local school grounds for parades.¹⁸ A substantial facility was needed to consolidate the dispersed, relatively homeless militia.

Almost immediately after coming to office, Bennett began pressing his government colleagues for a Calgary armoury to rectify this situation. Of course, he was well aware of the previous negotiations between the city and the military, but since these had been conducted while the Liberals were in power he needed to sell the idea to the Conservative administration. By December 1911 Hughes was favourably disposed to the

¹⁷ Thomas, *Liberal Party in Alberta*, 116.

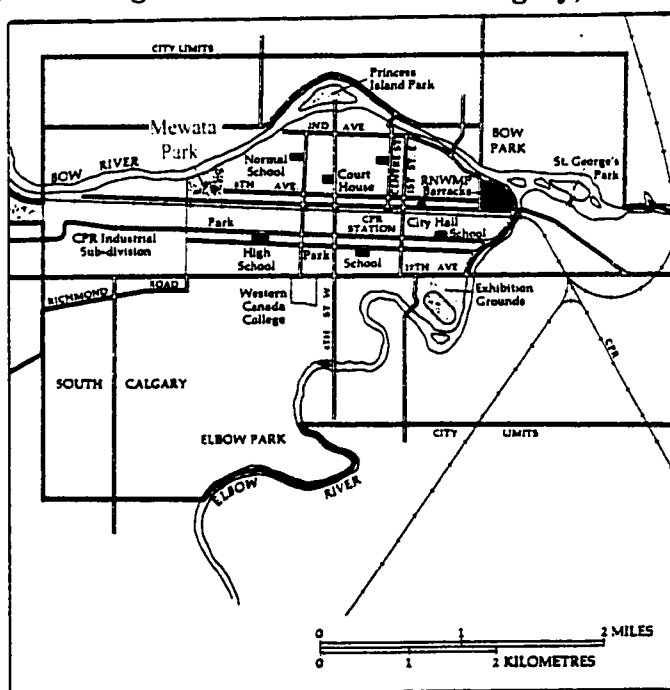
¹⁸ James H. Gray, *R.B. Bennett: The Calgary Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Bettina Liverant, "Patterns on the Land: Themes of Order and Wilderness in Planning, Calgary 1869-1966," M.A. thesis (University of Calgary, June 1998), 102; Max Foran, *Calgary: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1978); Dempsey, *Calgary*, 103. The Main Estimates for 1914 contained a note that "the Militia units in Calgary are, at present, accommodated in rented buildings as there is no Drill Hall available for their use... An Armoury is very necessary at Calgary to accommodate the following troops": Regimental HQ and Squadron "D," 15th Light Horse – 180 Officers, N.C.O.'s and men; Regimental HQ and 6 companies 103rd regiment – 320 Officers, N.C.O.'s and men; Signalling Corps – No. 13 Section; HQ of 14th Company A.S.C. – 106 Officers, N.C.O.'s and men; Corps of Guides No. 13 – Officer; Canadian Engineers – 4th Field Troop. Department of Public Works (DPW) Main Estimates, 1914, Alberta-Public Buildings-Calgary-Drill Hall, NAC, RG 11, vol. 3148, File 433 No. 5.

erection of an armoury in Bennett's constituency, and R.B. began to pressure the Minister of Public Works for a \$250,000 structure. The next month the matter of a "Western armoury" was discussed in the House of Commons. Hughes announced that "towns making offers of valuable sites were most likely to receive favorable consideration of the government." Several western Canadian centres were competing with Calgary for drill hall construction but Calgary's land offer, valued at \$100,000, topped the list of towns and cities offering free sites to the government.¹⁹ On 21 June 1912 an order-in-council approved \$50,000 for the construction of a Calgary drill hall, and a further \$50,000 was requested in the 1913-14 main estimates.²⁰

With Bennett on the scene, a salient feature of the past agreements changed. The locations that had been discussed while the Liberals were in power were no longer desirable. The Conservative MP had his sights set on a particular piece of city property that had not been offered previously, but seemed ideally suited for a bold militia building. Mewata Park resided on the boundary

between Calgary's downtown and residential developments to the south and west, a prominent and central location for an armoury [see figure 6]. The twenty-six and one-quarter acres, originally a federal reserve, were donated to the city in 1906 with the stipulation that the site be used for park and recreational services. By 1913 it was used entirely as an athletic park

Figure 6: Mewata Park in Calgary, 1908²¹



¹⁹ Moose Jaw offered a site valued at \$40,000, Regina a \$75,000 site, and Edmonton a site said to be worth \$40,000. Red Deer, Minnedosa, Port Arthur, Fort William, and a number of towns in British Columbia also offered sites. House of Commons Debates, 24 January 1912, 1815-16; News-Telegram, 25 January 1912.

²⁰ The first grant of \$50,000 was transferred to the DMD by an order in council dated 21 June 1912. It was noted that the plans for the Calgary Drill Hall, based on standard designs recently adopted by the Militia Department, were nearly finished as of 15 November 1912. Department of Public Works Main Estimates, 1914, Alberta-Public Buildings-Calgary-Drill Hall, NAC, RG 11, vol. 3148, File 433 No. 5.

²¹ Base map taken from Foran, *Calgary*, 54.

and playground, including a bandstand, baseball and football grounds, running track, jumping pits, and children's apparatus. Mewata's proximity to the city centre made it a favourite location for athletic clubs. As the 1913 Annual Report of Calgary Parks and Recreation concluded, the park's facilities were "thoroughly appreciated"; during the season, 352 baseball, 174 soccer, and 29 rugby games were played.²² If the armoury were built there, it would stand out against its surroundings and be viewed by vast numbers of Calgarians on a daily basis.

The selection of Mewata Park was also important for local political reasons. At the time that Bennett was determined to procure a piece of prime parkland for the militia, city officials were dedicated to expanding the amount of park space and play ground sites in Calgary.²³ Hearing rumours that the military was prepared to divest itself of an old rifle range in the city, Council actively solicited Bennett's assistance in October 1912 to try and obtain this property for park purposes, offering the proposed site at Mewata in exchange. Bennett appeared to be open to this suggestion, at least for the moment. "The question of the erection of the Armoury in this City is one of vital importance," the Calgary MP asserted, and if the City consented to the erection of the building in Mewata Park he was "of the opinion that I could do something towards securing the Rifle Range in exchange, but of that I am not certain. I will be glad if your Council will take the matter up and advise me." The Mayor, receiving Bennett's optimistic response, replied the same day that the "City would be deeply indebted to you if you can secure this splendid piece of property ... in exchange for a site at Mewata Park for an Armoury, and I shall lay the matter before the Council at its next meeting."²⁴

Council moved quickly. At its 29 October 1912 meeting, Council referred the armoury matter to the Finance Committee with the power to act. The Finance Committee report was introduced to Council two weeks later and recommended that a 160,000

²² CCA, RGA 23, Parks and Recreation, Box #1, Annual Reports, G83-19, File #3, Annual Report 1913, pp. 1, 5-6.

²³ For a recent overview of town planning and the City Beautiful movement in Calgary see Liverant, "Patterns on the Land," 102-29.

²⁴ Letter, Chairman to Bennett, 8 October 1912; Letter, Bennett to Mayor Mitchell, 16 October 1912; Letter, Mayor to Bennett, 16 October 1912; CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412. A series of internal City correspondence regarding the rifle range site can be found in BoC, Box #46, File: Commissioners' Estimates re: Contracts and Estimates, M-Z, 1913.

square foot strip of land in Mewata Park be donated for the armoury. The proposal carried the added consideration that the Commissioners look into the purchase (or some other form of agreement) for use of a strip of land immediately north of Mewata Park on the north side of the river.²⁵ Once passed by Council, the offer was relayed to Colonel Cruikshank, who worked with the City to acquire the necessary plans to send to the Minister and also communicated the news to other Government officials.²⁶ Given the DOC's experience in the lengthy processes of trying to obtain sites for the armoury as well as summer training, Cruikshank was likely not surprised with the controversy that was to come.

On 17 March 1913 Council passed another resolution advising the City Solicitor to prepare a transfer of the Mewata site designated in the 1912 resolution. While the City Solicitor began to work out the legal implications of the transfer, Mayor Herbert A. Sinnott wrote to Bennett to inform him of the Council's steps forward. With his own interests in mind, the Mayor reminded Bennett of the "agreement" that the federal and municipal governments had arranged the year before regarding the rifle range transfer. Bennett was asked to take the matter up with the government and secure the land *quid pro quo* for the City of Calgary.²⁷ With regard to the matter of the rifle range, Bennett could not recall any agreement of the nature the Mayor suggested. Perhaps, if he did even vaguely remember the discussion, he did not want to confuse the situation with all the itinerant delays that had marked negotiations to that time. His conclusion was somewhat laconic:

All Cities are now supplying sites for armories. Calgary offered a site near the old hospital building. It is very unsuitable. If Calgary wants a \$50,000 building it can get it by not providing a decent site. If, on the other hand Mewata Park is available, Calgary will obtain an armory that will be

²⁵ Letter, City Clerk to Chairman and Members of Finance Committee, 30 October 1912, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412; "Extracts from Minutes of Council, City of Calgary," 14 November 1912, CCA, RG 26, Box 60, File #483, City Solicitor's Correspondence, A-B, 1913.

²⁶ Letter, City Clerk to Cruikshank, 30 November 1912; Letter, Cruikshank to City Clerk, 2 Dec 1912; Letter, City Clerk to Acting City Engineer, 6 Dec 1912; Letter, City Clerk to Cruikshank, 12 Dec 1912, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412.

²⁷ Letter, City Solicitor to City Clerk, 19 March 1913; Letter, City Clerk to City Solicitor, 24 March 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412; Letter, Mayor to R.B. Bennett, 20 March 1913, BoC, Box #46, File: Commissioners' Estimates re: Contracts and Estimates, M-Z, 1913

second to none in Western Canada. I am leaving for the West tonight, and hope to see you there.²⁸

By the time Bennett's letter arrived, Mayor Sinnott had already felt the first winds of controversy blow over the proposed deal. A few days after the Council meeting, the Secretary of the Calgary Trades and Labor Council (CTLC) had written a letter to the City politicians informing them that the organization had unanimously passed a resolution against the transfer of the Mewata site on the grounds that it was never referred to the electorate for endorsement and that "the present Mewata Park is the only ground available for recreation and athletic sports and as such is of far greater use and benefit than an Armory can possibly be." The CTLC urged the City officials to use their power to support the resolution to "the utmost of [their] ability."²⁹

The Mayor's reply to the Trades and Labour Council was revealing in its marked difference from his correspondence with Bennett. Sinnott stated that he was "opposed to the placing of the armory in Mewata Park, and entirely in accord with the resolution of your Council," and he added that a committee had been appointed "to take up the question and supervision of the play grounds of the City, with power to recommend to the City Council the desirability of having these play grounds extended." He appealed to the CTLC to assist the committee members with its "advice and influence, as I think it is very essential at the present time to secure more play ground while there is an opportunity."³⁰

The Mayor's conflicting interests were coming to light. Although he did not want to give a portion of Mewata Park to the military, as per Bennett's wishes, he nevertheless was committed to the erection of an armoury. With the tenacious MP pressuring for quick action, he could not be openly adversarial to Bennett's plans without incurring federal displeasure. At the same time, he could not alienate his constituents like those involved in the CTLC, especially when they were committed to the sort of considerations

²⁸ Letter, R.B. Bennett, House of Commons, to Mayor Sinnott, 28 March 1913, BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913

²⁹ Letter, J.E. Young, Secretary, Calgary Trades and Labor Council, to the Mayor and Commissioners of Calgary, 22 March 1913; BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913.

³⁰ Letter, Mayor of Calgary, to J.E. Young, Secretary, TLC, 27 March 1913, BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913.

Thomas Mawson had conjured up in his “Ideal City” visions the year before.³¹ An agreement over the old rifle range might have helped allay concerns over the loss of greenspace, but Bennett had not followed through on this arrangement despite his earlier promise. Bennett’s curt response to the Mayor’s reminder must have disgruntled the latter and likely contributed to the feelings Sinnott expressed to the CTLC. Whatever the motivation, Sinnott was speaking out of both sides of his mouth and began to scramble for a solution. The City Solicitor’s legal opinion on the potential transfer of part of Mewata Park only compounded the prevailing confusion and budding controversy.

The legal realities of Canada’s federal structure made the development scheme increasingly complex. The federal government was spearheading the drill hall construction project, and the City was involved as an active player since it owned public lands in Calgary. The City’s lawyer suggested that the provincial government was also party to the issue due to the subordinate constitutional position of municipal governments. Municipalities, unlike the provincial and federal levels of government, did (and do) not have any guaranteed constitutional right to exist, and from a strict legal viewpoint they only exist and take such form as their respective provincial governments see fit to provide. Their status as “creatures” or “creations” of provincial governments is crucial to understanding the constraints under which municipalities operate.³² In this case, the City Solicitor was not comfortable that the City had the legal right to transfer the land as resolved by Council on 17 March. The original grant of the property from the Crown in 1902 stipulated that the property would be “used for the purposes of a public park and for no other purpose or purposes whatsoever.” Although Section 159 of the City Charter gave authority to the City to dispose of lands vested in the City, “all lands obtained or held in trust by the City for any special or particular purpose” (such as Mewata Park) were exceptional and could not be transferred “without obtaining special

³¹ Thomas Mawson, the British town planner, was on a lecture tour of Canada in 1912 and addressed the Canadian Club of Calgary. His “landscape artistry,” which blended the “‘City Beautiful Tradition’ with the symmetry and totality of the architectural grand design,” captured the imagination of Calgarians. Through 1913 he worked with the town planning commission in Calgary before delivering a final report in 1914. Max Foran, “The Mawson Report in Historical Perspective,” *Alberta History* 28/3 (Summer 1980), 32-33. In his plans, greenspace certainly took precedence over military designs.

³² C.R. Tindal and S.N. Tindal, *Local Government in Canada*, 4th ed (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1995), 190, 221.

legislation from the Provincial Government authorizing such transfer or in the alternative without obtaining the consent of the ratepayers of the City.” The lawyer was uncertain:

that the consent of the ratepayers as aforesaid would be conclusive without also obtaining such special [provincial] legislation, but on the other hand I am thoroughly satisfied that special legislation would be sufficient without the consent of the ratepayers. Viewed, however, from a practical point of view it may be very difficult to obtain special legislation without first obtaining the consent of the ratepayers at a vote held for this purpose. If such consent were obtained there would be no fear but that the Provincial Government would grant such special legislation and the proposed transfer rendered absolutely valid.³³

It was up to the City to decide whether to apply directly to the Provincial Government with or without previous ratepayer approval. As it stood, the last Council resolution could not be legally binding since the City did not have independent authority to complete the land transfer. Deferring to the provincial government’s authority was the suggested option.

Council was again in a quagmire. Alderman Ross announced that he would make a motion to reconsider the transfer of Mewata Park at the regular meeting of 31 March. In light of the City Solicitor’s brief, the previous motion empowering the donation of the site was rescinded. Aldermen Crichton and Frost responded with a motion to submit a by-law authorizing the Mewata transfer to the ratepayers for a vote, but Council defeated their attempt. After vigorous discussion, an ambiguous resolution was passed that saw the divided Council sitting on the proverbial political fence. No portion of Mewata was to be transferred until the Commissioners tried to secure an equally desirable site elsewhere.³⁴

The search for a site began anew. Several Calgary property owners contacted City officials offering to sell their land for a drill hall site but to no avail.³⁵ Local militia

³³ Letter, Clinton J. Ford, City Solicitor, to Mayor and Aldermen, 31 March 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412.

³⁴ “Extracts from Minutes of Council, City of Calgary,” CCA, RG 26, Box 60, File #483, City Solicitor’s Correspondence, A-B, 1913.

³⁵ See, for example, handwritten letter, Mrs. Annie McDougall to Mayor and Commissioners, 29 April 1913, and letter, Toole, Peet & Co., to City Clerk, 28 April 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412; Letter, Toole, Peet & Co., to City Commissioners, 14 June 1913; Letter, W. Toole, Toole, Peet & Co., to Mayor, 23 June 1913, BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913. As late as December private offers were made to the City and considered. See, for example, Letter, Charles

representatives, recognizing the City's reluctance (and inability) to part with the Mewata site, visited the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners and urged him to secure an alternate, suitable locale with urgency. The Chairman reconnoitred several potential areas with Alderman Garden (the Chairman of the Industrial Commission) and, after a subsequent meeting with the Calgary Committee of the Militia Associations, deemed that "the only site apparently available, which would be acceptable both to the Militia men and the Government," lay between 8th and 9th Avenues and faced Mewata Park. Most of the designated block was vacant, he informed the Mayor and Council, and the rest was likely available for purchase at a reasonable price. Time was of the essence. "If the matter is to be settled this year," the Chairman asserted, "and sufficient money placed in the estimates by the Minister of Militia for the undertaking of this work, the matter must be settled at once, and I would therefore advise that some action be taken immediately."³⁶

Council was receptive to the new proposal. On 12 May it passed a resolution authorizing the purchase of the property and mobilized its resources to try and move the process ahead quickly. The Mayor contacted both Bennett and Cruikshank advising them of the resolution, optimistically stating to the latter that the "situation seems to meet with the general approval of the citizens, and many of the militia men of the City." Sinnott urged for an expedient response in the hopes that "a sufficient sum could be placed in the [militia] estimates this year" and construction commenced. However, Bennett and the DOC wanted more information before making a decision.³⁷

Upon reflection, Bennett only confirmed his earlier choice of the Mewata site. On 8 August 1913, Bennett and Aldermen Freeze and Crichton toured all of the potential armoury sites. The Calgary MP announced at the end of the trip that he still preferred the eastern edge of Mewata Park for the handsome project he envisioned [see figure 7]; the

Watson, Victoria BC, to Mayor Sinnott, 19 November 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412; Letter, Mayor to City Clerk, 1 Dec. 1913, BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913.

³⁶ Letter, Chairman, to Mayor and Aldermen, 12 May 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412.

³⁷ Letter, City Clerk to Mayor and Commissioners, 13 May 1913; Telegram, Mayor Sinnott, to Bennett, 13 May 1913; Letter, Mayor to Bennett, Ottawa, 29 May 1913; Letter, Mayor to Cruikshank, 17 May 1913; Letter, Cruikshank to Mayor Sinnott, 30 May 1913; Letter, Bennett to Mayor, 2 June 1913, BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913.

same opinion that Hughes had expressed during his earlier visit to the sites. In the aftermath Freeze assured Council that:

It looks as if it must be Mewata Park or nothing... If we want a dinky armoury or a dinky site we may get it, but if we want a fine looking armoury on a good site we must use Mewata Park.... The armoury would look fine if put up there. We had the plans along with us and they call for two big towers on the building which will be built so they will look down Eighth Ave.

I intend to have a meeting of the athletic organizations that are interested in the park for the purpose of talking the question over with them some time early next week. They are the chief opponents, but I believe they will see the matter in the right light if it is explained to them. It would be foolish to pay out \$150,000 just because a site is wanted for a soccer field. The matter of restrictions on the park may be easily arranged. The restrictions on Mewata were put there by the Dominion government so there should be no difficulty having them removed.³⁸

The pressure was on. The aldermen's committee report [see appendix D] recommending the transfer of the Mewata site was accepted at the next Council meeting, and the Councillors passed a resolution by the narrowest of margins authorizing the donation of the site.³⁹ The militia's needs were determined to be paramount to those of athletic organizations. Still, not all were as optimistic about the prospect as Freeze. A media war was raging over the issue, and interest groups were mobilizing. Freeze's comment about the ease with which a transfer could take place came back to haunt him.

The media has always played a prominent role, both reflecting public opinion as well as shaping it. Newspapers are key players in the local policy process in a number of ways. The most direct and obvious way the media influences decision-making is through the coverage which it gives (or do not give) to local government activities and issues and through the editorial views that are presented.⁴⁰ In the early years of the twentieth century

³⁸ News-Telegram, 9 August 1913. Aldermen Crichton and Freeze had been appointed to a special committee to solicit Bennett's views. Hughes had visited the potential sites in June 1913. See "Extracts from Minutes of Council, City of Calgary," 4 August 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 60, File #483, City Solicitor's Correspondence, A-B, 1913.

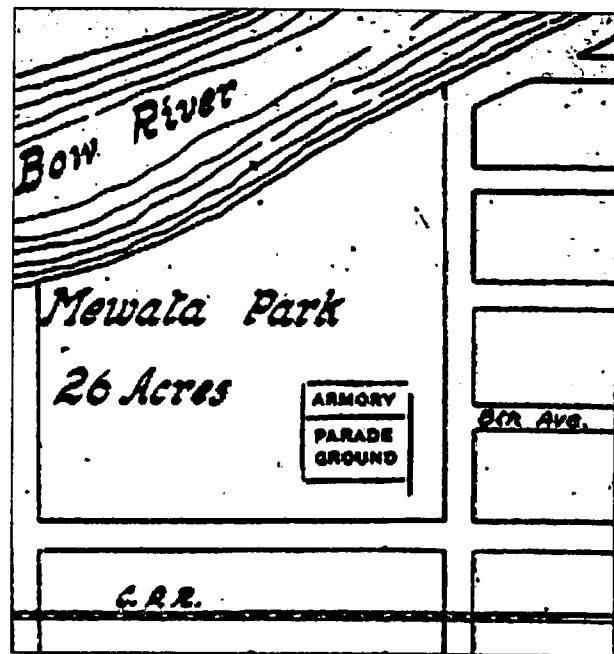
³⁹ The vote was as follows: Yeas- Alds. Ramsey, Frost, Carscallen, Crichton, Freeze and Carson (6); Nays- Alds G.H. Ross, Garden, Adshead, Tregillus & William Ross (5). Extract from Minutes of Council, 18 August 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412. Apparently the Solicitor's concerns were ignored when this decision was reached.

⁴⁰ Tindal and Tindal, Local Government in Canada, 289.

Calgary was home to various rival newspapers with different political allegiances who duelled for daily readership.⁴¹ Coverage and interpretation of the controversy over the armoury and Mewata Park diverged and brought various journals into direct conflict as they competed with one another to mould the debate according to their respective political interests.

The Morning Albertan, Calgary's Liberal daily, ardently opposed the Conservative-inspired project from the onset. It championed the athletes who rallied against the transfer of the site in the spring of 1913, broadcast with pleasure what it had felt was the demise of the plan, and continued to support the anti-Mewata cause throughout the summer and fall. Upon hearing the news of Bennett's "parliamentary ultimatum" stipulating that it would be Mewata or nothing, the paper was unabashedly critical. "If the matter must be revived," the *Albertan* argued, "let the champions of the armoury site come out and meet the athletes openly, and

Figure 7: Proposed Site At Mewata Park⁴²



tell what they want with the balancing privileges which they are prepared to grant and see carried into effect." It was confident that the general public would denounce the proposal as a threat to the city building programme.⁴³ Although the militia department had suggested that the building might be used for an auditorium or convention hall, the Liberal paper argued that the public would not accrue any benefit from its presence. It

⁴¹ I have selected for comparison the two newspapers described by Kesterton as representative of competing journalism in Calgary. The *Calgary Herald* was purchased by Southam in 1908. Its rival, *The Morning Albertan*, became a daily in 1902 when the *Calgary Tribune* and the *Calgary Albertan* were merged by W.M. Davidson. W.H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada*. (Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, 1967), 114-15.

⁴² *The Daily Herald*, 6 December 1913, 1.

⁴³ *Albertan*, 9 August 1913, 1.

would only be available when the militia found it to be convenient; likely, “in a year or so a war-like message would come forth, shutting out the common people.” Although supporters said the armoury would only take up a small portion of the park and would only be used for part of the year, the *Albertan*’s editor argued that it would “take the heart right out of the park” and “destroy the park” as a civic playground.⁴⁴ It cast Bennett’s assertion (that the armoury would be in Mewata Park or no other place in Calgary) as either bluff or evidence that the federal authorities were not prepared to deal fairly with the city.⁴⁵

The matter was not only about athletic facilities, the opposition argued, but about playgrounds, park space, and civic planning in general. In the *Albertan*’s opinion, nothing was more important than preserving the site for the people; not even the needs of the militia.⁴⁶ The newspaper chastized Bennett for his faulty logic, and refused to believe that the militia would not encroach on the surrounding parkland for parade grounds. It was especially disdainful of the politician’s assertions that, if the city refused to grant the militia department that land he wanted, a \$30,000 drill hall would suffice, whereas if Mewata was used a \$350,000 to \$400,000 building would be granted. This was political manipulation and coercion at its worst. The *Albertan* summarized its position as follows:

The people of Calgary need Mewata park. It is too small as it is at present. The park will be materially injured by the location of a drill hall. There is no particular advantage in placing the drill hall there. There is no strategic advantage. There is no added convenience. Other sites are quite as central. It is the most desirable site in the city and therefore Col. Sam Hughes must have it and he is attempting to coerce us. It is merely for the self-glorification of the department of militia, a sort of monument to Mars, and Mr. Bennett tells us to strip ourselves of our best park, to rob our children of their playgrounds, that the department may demonstrate with a

⁴⁴ *Albertan*, 12 August 1913, 3.

⁴⁵ The *Albertan* looked to the case of Vancouver as a comparison. Although the coastal city already had an armoury that the *Vancouver Sun* deemed adequate for the city’s militia, the *Albertan* asserted that Sam Hughes and a local Vancouver MP decided that the city needed a new one. The injustice in Calgary was that the Alberta city did not have any armoury, and furthermore, while the federal government paid \$250,000 to a private landowner in Vancouver to erect a militia facility there, in Calgary it insisted that the city give the militia department the “heart of their most attractive park” or not get anything at all. Based on this logic, the editor argued it would get a drill hall whether it agreed to give up Mewata or not. *Albertan*, 13 August 1913, 2.

⁴⁶ On the *Albertan* tying the Mewata Park issue to the larger issues of civic playground and park space see “Save Our Playgrounds,” 29 August 1913, 3, and “Calgary and its Parks,” 12 September 1913, 3.

big building. If we do not bow down and do their bidding, a \$30,000 building is good enough for us.⁴⁷

At this point, the *Albertan* did not express a general problem with the erection of a militia facility. Its concern was with the site that had been selected and Bennett's heavy-handed tactics.

The *Calgary Daily Herald*, in contrast, was supportive of the armoury construction and the use of the Mewata Park site. While the *Albertan* stressed the importance of parkland, the *Herald* emphasized the needs of the militia and appealed to civic pride in the military to solicit support for the Mewata Park transfer. It argued that the dramatic increase in the number of active militiamen who trained that summer across Canada "show[ed] the trend of the public mind":

Canadians, native and foreign born, are actively interested in preparing themselves for the defence of their country. One hundred and seventy-eight thousand men [the estimated available volunteer force in Canada] represented perhaps fifteen percent of the available able-bodied men in the Dominion. With that number voluntarily devoting time and energy to the country's service we have not far to seek to realize that the big majority of Canadians are in thorough sympathy with the Borden policy of allowing Canada to do its share in home and empire defence.⁴⁸

Framed in this context, the "hundreds" or "thousands" of militiamen in Calgary who were presently ill-accommodated and who would use the armoury each week needed to be given higher priority than the few athletes who would lose but one soccer field.⁴⁹ In its assessment of general civic sentiment, the *Herald* found "abundant proof" that Calgarians were proud of the military and thus supportive of granting an armoury site in Mewata Park. The Conservative newspaper lambasted the opponents of the proposal who disparaged "the strength and usefulness of the militia," a proud institution composed of the "public spirited man who gives his best time and energies to afford Canada a formidable line of defence":

It ill-becomes pusillanimous people to attempt to ridicule the citizen soldiery, an institution that has studded Canadian history with its most brilliant chapters and which will always form the backbone of the

⁴⁷ *Albertan*, 15 August 1913, 3.

⁴⁸ *Herald*, 9 August 1913, 5.

⁴⁹ *Herald*, 21 August 1913, 5.

dominion's defence. As long as Canada is a virile nation it will continue to develop its defensive structure. Of this feeling the militia is the finest symptom because service in it is purely voluntary.... [The militia consists of] the men whom local agitators, impelled by no motive of public spiritedness, would slur with the sobriquet of "the amateur soldier." These are the same men behind whom those who disparage them would take refuge if the call to arms was sounded to Canadians. These are the men who ask the consideration of Calgary; who ask for a little plot in Mewata Park, where a building may be erected in which they can more successfully carry on the work of preparing themselves to serve their country better in time of need.

The people of Calgary are behind "the amateur soldier." He is a man, without selfish motives; a real man and entitled to consideration. He gets no reward for his devotion to his country and his expenditure of time and energy. Give him a place where he can at least enjoy reasonable facilities in carrying out his commendable work.⁵⁰

The reader was left with the sense that nothing less than a magnificent structure in Mewata Park would do justice to the devoted sons of the dominion, who had brought glory to Canada and the Empire and would stand "ready, aye ready" to lay down their lives in defence of Calgary and the dominion as a whole. The newspaper relied on characterizations of the militia and appeals to Calgary's pride in the "thousands" of community members serving that institution such as these to generate and reinforce support for the Mewata transfer.

The *Herald's* assessments of the situation stressed co-operation and the possibility of a symbiotic militia-civic relationship vis-à-vis the park and the armoury. While the newspaper conceded on 11 August that opposition to locating the armoury on a corner of the park had "not been unwarranted,"⁵¹ it stressed that the proposed militia facility would be mutually beneficial for the military and Calgarians in general:

⁵⁰ *Herald*, 23 August 1913, 6; 25 August 1913, 6.

⁵¹ In a 26 June 1913 editorial, the *Herald* responded to Hughes' recent visit and his demand for Mewata Park with the following: "From the colonel's standpoint, there is merit in his attitude, and if the city had plenty of land in its possession it would be willing to fall in with his scheme. But we have no surplus land, and the money to secure some is not easily obtained. Of course we want the very best building we can get, and will make good use of it. Yet we cannot move the city around to find the one site that appeals to Colonel Hughes. In the best interests of Calgary and the department he should cooperate with us in arriving at a settlement of the site problem. An arbitrary attitude cannot benefit the Department of Militia in whose welfare Col. Hughes has so deep an interest." By August its tone had decidedly changed to correspond with that of the Conservative party and it supported Col. Hughes' and R.B. Bennett's choice to the fullest. The

If the armoury can be so laid out as to afford the athletes of the city the use of the gymnasium and baths most of the antagonism toward the building will be wiped out. Calgary wants both an armoury and more extensive facilities for the encouragement of healthy sports and exercises. If the armoury can be made to serve both purposes athletic bodies will be willing to recede somewhat from their former attitude, which was one of hostility to the location of that structure in the best athletic park in the city.⁵²

The *Herald* concluded that donating the parcel of land in Mewata Park would spare the city about \$150,000 (the cost of a suitable alternative), and saw no reason why some of these savings could not be used to extend athletic grounds and parks in the city. It refused to concede that the militia would intrude on the remaining section of the park without city consent; case studies of 'big armouries' in Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg were depicted to illustrate the non-intrusive and mutually beneficial relationship that could ensue.⁵³ In short, more young men would benefit from "healthful recreation" if one-tenth of Mewata's space was used for an armoury than could be found in any other equal area within the park. After all, the Conservative journal reasoned, the volunteers had "at least as much right to consideration in public spaces in Calgary as any other athletic organization."⁵⁴

The media represented only one of the many interest groups involved in planning decisions. Public administration scholars Richard and Susan Tindal explain that for the minority of citizens who exercise their franchise, "voting in municipal elections is, at best, an infrequent and rather passive activity." Many members of the community seek more continuous, direct involvement and an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, and are not content with merely passing judgement "after-the-fact" by voting for or against certain councillors. For such citizens the normal recourse has been to form or join local groups.⁵⁵ A number of local groups rallied around the Mewata Park issue, and relied on newspapers sympathetic to their cause to disseminate their views to a

Albertan took issue with this change in opinion. See 4 December 1913, 1; 5 December 1913, 3; 6 December 1913, 3.

⁵² Herald, 11 August 1913, 6.

⁵³ Herald, 21 August 1913, 6; 27 August 1913, 6; 29 August 1913, 6.

⁵⁴ Herald, 25 October 1913, 6.

⁵⁵ Tindal and Tindal, Local Government in Canada, 249.

wider civic audience.⁵⁶ The local Militia, of course, lobbied for an urgent transfer in a matter that was “of the most vital importance to the progress of the City of Calgary as a Military centre.”⁵⁷ Business groups like the Calgary Board of Trade Council (CBTC) also favoured the Mewata site for the armoury. Certainly local business interests, especially in construction and related areas, stood to gain from a quick start to a large building project.⁵⁸ The CBTC voted unanimously at a 15 August 1913 meeting to support Bennett’s designs for the site. The president and five members of the trade council were even appointed to a committee to speak before City Council and acquire support from the aldermen.⁵⁹ In opposition, labour groups continued their alliance with athletic organizations. The Bricklayers’, Masons’ and Plasterers’ International Union of America sent a letter of protest to City Council in early September, and the Calgary Trades and Labor Council (CTLC) followed suit later that month, appealing up to the provincial legislature that the armoury should be located on one of the three hills commanding the city, not in vital playground space. While the *Albertan* staunchly supported the labour opponents and resisted rumours that they were acting in a partisan fashion to embarrass certain local politicians, there was a degree of political motivation to their actions.⁶⁰ Alongside “anti-Mewata” edicts, the Liberal newspaper criticized Canadian militiamen who were acting in an aid to the civil power capacity to put down labour disputes on the West coast. This context likely influenced labour groups opposed to the armoury construction project.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Individuals also shared their views through letters to the editor. See, for example, *Albertan*, 19 August 1913, 3, and 6 December 1913, 3. This chapter focusses on the actions of interest groups as these are presumably more indicative of a larger constituency of public opinion than an individual commentary.

⁵⁷ See appendix E for the full text of a letter sent by the local militia to the Mayor and Council.

⁵⁸ On the distinctions between business organizations and other citizen groups see Edmund Fowler, *Building Cities That Work* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 291, and Elizabeth Bloomfield, “Research Note: Boards of Trade and Canadian Urban Development,” *Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine* XII/2 (October/october 1983), 77-86.

⁵⁹ *Albertan*, 16 August 1913, 1.

⁶⁰ Letter, Mayor to J.M. Miller, City Clerk, 2 September 1913. In a reply the next day, the Mayor wrote that since the matter had been handed to the courts, “it was thought advisable by the Council that no action should be taken in the matter, consequently your communication was tabled for the time being.” Letter, Mayor, to George Evans, Secretary, Bricklayers’, Masons’ and Plasterers’ International Union, Calgary, 3 September 1913, BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913. *Albertan*, 20 September 1913, 1; 22 September 1913, 3; 21 October 1913, 3.

⁶¹ The following excerpt from the *Albertan*, found just below an anti-Mewata commentary in the same column, is illustrative: “What is the militia for? The despatches intimate that the militia who have been

On 22 August 1913 the anti-Mewata faction arranged a “mass meeting” at the Calgary YMCA building to debate the Mewata Park site. For the organizers, the meeting was a failure. Major R.T.D. Aitken presided over the meeting which was attended by a huge crowd. The committee room was completely filled and overflowed into the billiard room. It was a spirited affair that featured speeches by athletes, militiamen, spokespersons from various business and professional associations, labour representatives, aldermen, and members of the general public. The debate was vicious, but those who supported the city council decision to transfer the site clearly prevailed. When the crowd overwhelmingly passed a resolution approving the action of council, the disgruntled anti-Mewata troop promptly moved upstairs to host their own “rump” meeting.⁶²

Rumours had begun to circulate in mid-August (encouraged by *The Albertan* and anti-Mewata forces) that the proposed transfer was illegal. “Several lawyers of repute” argued that every ratepayer in Calgary had equity in the park and that the aldermen could not vote it away in a Council resolution without their consent. Furthermore, *The Albertan* suggested that “even should the people vote to give the park away, it would not hold if any taxpayer chose to contest it, ... [as] even a majority of the ratepayers could not vote away the equity of the others.” Not all were convinced. Alderman “Tappy” Frost, whom the newspaper confronted in light of the above argument, was “somewhat peeved” at the suggestion that he reconsider his vote, stating that he would not “until there is so much frost in a warm place that it will be frozen over.” After the opponents of the Mewata Park site found themselves overwhelmed at the “mass meeting,” they made a “flank movement” and moved to another hall to plan the next steps. There they collected money, secured the services of Clifford T. Jones as their attorney, and the next day took the first step towards injunctions that would “force the city fathers to take the matter before the people.” *The Albertan* felt this course was appropriate.⁶³

hunting down striking miners on Vancouver Island are to be sent back to Vancouver to be on hand in case of a strike of street railway men. Do the people of Canada pay the militia enough to carry out the wishes of corporations in their troubles with their underpaid employees?” 30 August 1913, 3.

⁶² *Herald*, 23 August 1913, 15.

⁶³ *Albertan*, 22 August 1913, 1; 23 August 1913, 1, 11.

Less than a week later formal legal proceedings began. Jones made an application for a summons to quash the Council resolution granting the Mewata site, and Mr. Justice Simmons in Calgary granted it. On the morning of 14 September, Jones pleaded before an Edmonton judge that the City could not give the park space away without an empowering act from the provincial legislature. City Solicitor C.J. Ford followed that afternoon, asserting that the City had no intention of transferring the property until the legislature had been notified of the matter. In this sense, Ford maintained, the resolution was not an illegal act. The city solicitor's line of argument was an expression of the opinions he had outlined earlier in his legal opinion for the city. What he wanted from the judge was a clear interpretation of the by-law dealing with the transfer of property so that the necessary authorizations could be obtained. Judgement was reserved.⁶⁴

The court eventually dismissed the application for injunction in light of Ford's willingness to seek provincial approval, but the anti-Mewata forces claimed the legal proceedings as a victory. First, the City did not have the authority to make the grant while the matter was before the court, and as a result work could not begin on the armoury for the remainder of the year.⁶⁵ Second, and most importantly, the question was now in the provincial legislature's hands.

Several salient dynamics made this development ripe for controversy. Sifton's provincial government was Liberal, but all of the members representing Calgary in the legislature were Conservatives. The local press, partisan as it was, made sure that this became a contentious topic. *The Herald* chastised the taking of the issue to the provincial legislature as nothing more than a "political trick designed by Calgary Liberals to embarrass the Borden government" and asserted that the dignity of the legislature was imperilled if it did not refuse to interfere in "so purely a local matter." The Liberals were trying to make the matter a political question, the Conservative newspaper argued, so that they could use the delays "for political capital." *The Albertan*, in turn, continued to berate the *Herald* with its own accusations of partisanship, asserting that the Conservative dailies had brought partisan politics into the fray. It was the *Herald* that was staffed with

⁶⁴ *Albertan*, 28 August 1913, 10; *Herald*, 15 September 1913, 1, 12.

⁶⁵ Letter, C.J. Ford, City Solicitor, to Mayor and Commissioners, 25 September 1913, BoC, Box #39, File: Commissions Correspondence with other Municipalities, L-R, 1913; *Albertan*, 18 September 1913, 8.

“narrow minded bigots,” the Liberal paper argued, “inspired by the partisan jealousy of Mr. Bennett.” Of course, both papers used this controversy as an occasion to heap criticism on one another.⁶⁶

An aldermanic delegation from the City of Calgary presented a private bill in the Edmonton legislature on 25 October 1913. The provisions of the bill authorized City Council to pass a by-law transferring the portion of Mewata Park to the armoury. While the three Calgary members of the legislature fought hard for the bill (supported by other members of the Opposition), the Liberals provided strong opposition. Headed by J.A. McArthur of Gleichen and George P. Smith of Camrose, certain Liberal members of the legislature successfully lobbied for a three-fifths clause to be inserted in the bill; this meant that a plebiscite would have to be taken and a by-law empowering the transfer would have to be endorsed by a majority of Calgary voters before the land could be turned over by the city. Even with these Government-inspired amendments, the bill was rejected. Smith tabled a petition carrying nearly 1500 Calgary signatures opposing the transfer on the grounds that “the ground that Mewata Park was originally deeded to the City in trust for park purposes only, and is more needed for the purposes of a park than for the purposes of an armoury.” He then made a motion that the chairman leave the chair. The Legislature, in Committee of the whole house, accepted the motion and killed the bill by a margin of 25 to 16.⁶⁷ Although the *Albertan* insisted that it was a free vote

⁶⁶ *Herald*, 11 October 1913, 5; 18 October 1913, 1; *Albertan*, 5 December 1913, 3. Indicative of the newspaper battle were attacks like: “We regret to say that there is a well developed feeling among responsible people of this city to the effect that something has gone seriously wrong with the thinking machinery of the Morning *Albertan*.... In connection with the discussion of the armory site alone its statements are so utterly wild, irresponsible and at variance with the truth that its very reason is open to question.” *Herald*, 26 August 1913, 6. The Liberal-supporting *Albertan* also engaged the *Calgary News-Telegram*, another Conservative daily in the city, for the latter’s support of the Mewata Park location for an armoury. See, for example, *Albertan*, 23 October 1913, 3.

⁶⁷ *Herald*, 18 October 1913, 1; Letter, C.J. Ford, City Solicitor, to J.M. Miller, City Clerk, re Mewata Park Site, 27 October 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 61, File #487, City Solicitor’s Correspondence, N-Z, 1913; Province of Alberta Archives (PAA), Acc. 76.277/1, Petition to Alberta Legislature, “Re Mewata Park /And/ City Of Calgary, Petition Against City’s Application.” The *Edmonton Bulletin* summarized the Liberal position as follows: “Liberal members argued that no city should give away park sites as they are one of the most valuable assets that a city can possess and should not be encroached upon by buildings. They also argued that if the Dominion government wanted to build the armory they would be prepared to buy a site and build. It was stated by Mr. Smith, that Vancouver had turned down a similar proposal from the Dominion government and since then the government had purchased a site at a cost of a quarter of a million dollars. Winnipeg and Saskatoon had also turned down similar offers and the government had gone ahead and bought sites. Mr. Smith described the action of the Dominion government as attempting to hold

(because three Liberal ministers declined to vote either way), all twenty-five individuals who killed the bill were members of Sifton's government. Every Liberal in the house when the vote was taken voted against it, which the *Herald* cast as evidence of a straight party vote upon "the most narrow of petty partisan lines."⁶⁸ This conclusion was reasonable under the circumstances. Of course, the *Herald* did not mention the fact that all of the Conservatives in the legislature at the time had voted *for* the bill. The opposition had voted along party lines as much as the Liberals.

Calgary's reception to the decision was divided. *The Herald* announced on its front page that "Calgary Got Raw Deal on Armory Site" and offered readers the opinions of various City officials who had ventured to Edmonton. Commissioner A.G. Graves felt it "most regrettable that the question of politics ever was injected" into the debate, and he continued that "the legislature could at least have permitted the citizens of Calgary to vote on the subject." Furthermore, he saw it as a violation of the City's rights to home rule. Even Alderman Crichton, an avowed Liberal, conceded that the excuse for the decision was "a pretty thin one." In an editorial the same day the *Herald* lamented that "certain partizan interests of this city apparently thought that the average intelligence of the people was not such as would permit people to vote sanely," so they pulled wires in Edmonton "and the government was lined up to support the small Calgary faction." The killing of the bill, the Conservative paper asserted, had "ruthlessly and unwarrantedly" abrogated the "self-government rights of the city" and was therefore a "personal affront" to every Calgarian. As expected, *The Albertan's* impression differed. It heralded the legislature's decision as courageous. "It would have been much easier to slough off the responsibility on the people of Calgary in the form of a plebiscite," the Liberal journal argued, "than to follow through on a principle against bonusing as it was [the MLAs'] duty to do."⁶⁹

up the cities." Clipping, undated (25 Oct 1913), PAA, 76.427/3, Scrapbook Hansard, 3rd Leg, 16 September 1913-5 April 1917.

⁶⁸ *Herald*, 27 October 1913, 1; 11 December 1913, 6. That Bennett himself could have incited such partisan reaction is likely. As the strongest Conservative voice in the province for much of the last decade, he undoubtedly made many enemies in the Liberal Government. Furthermore, as the sole Alberta Conservative in the House of Commons he continued to lend "his eloquent support to the provincial party" which made him a target for provincial Liberals even after he had left for Ottawa. Thomas, *Liberal Party in Alberta*, 138.

⁶⁹ *Herald*, 27 October 1913, 1, 5, 6; *Albertan*, 28 October 1913, 3.

The notion that a plebiscite was merely a way to “slough off” responsibility was ironic when it appeared on the pages of *The Albertan*. In August, the Liberal journal had espoused the idea that city council should have “one big referendum” to answer all the “troublesome questions” vexing it at the time, including the Mewata Park issue. Now the newspaper was decidedly against the prospect. It stressed that, in light of the province’s judgement, the plebiscite would only be an expression of opinion and would thus put the city “no nearer to giving away the park.” Furthermore, it argued that the vote’s relevance would be lessened because the ratepayers - not all the electors, nor all park users - were being asked to express their opinion. Finally, it did not feel that a plebiscite involved a direct question. Although *The Albertan* would abide by a judgement rendered by the people on the merits of the case, it now argued that the rival newspapers and other Conservative partisans were “mixing issues” and fighting only to “register a protest against the [provincial] government.”⁷⁰

Now the *Herald* became the strongest advocate of a plebiscite on the issue. Here was a way to *overcome* partisanship, the Conservative paper argued, a clear means of determining “the exact feeling” of Calgarians. Although the provincial government refused the City a plebiscite over the proposal to hand over the land for the building, it had not and could not “refuse us the right to take a plebiscite to show where the people stand in the matter.” If the vote was favourable, the city could then request that the federal government expropriate the necessary land and move ahead with construction.⁷¹ The pro-Mewata forces, the *Herald* at the helm, pushed hard for a formal opportunity to gauge public opinion.

Originally, only two plebiscite questions were slated to appear before voters on municipal election day. The Mewata Park issue was not one of them.⁷² At the 10 November 1913 Council Meeting, a resolution carried by a resounding 9-3 margin decreeing that ratepayers would be presented with the following question at the next municipal election: “Are you willing that a small portion of Mewata Park of

⁷⁰ *Albertan*, 21 August 1913, 3; 12 November 1913, 3.

⁷¹ *Herald*, 30 October 1913, 6. See also 10 November 1913, 6.

⁷² The two original issues were: (1) to determine whether half of the twelve aldermen would serve a two year term, and (2) whether the salary for aldermen should be increased to \$4,000. *Herald*, 28 October 1913, 13.

approximately 90,000 square feet immediately fronting on 8th Avenue West be used by the Dominion Government as a site for the erection of an Armoury?"⁷³ Although the decision carried in the provincial legislature meant that this question would not be legally binding, the City councillors must have realized that the Sifton government would be hard pressed to justify its opposition to the transfer of the Mewata site if Calgary civic support for the project was clear.

The plebiscite gave the Mewata Park debate renewed vigour and became a major election issue. At a crowded North Hill meeting held on 1 December 1913, all of the candidates who touched on the subject of Mewata Park made "a strong plea in favour" of locating an armoury therein. Although the reception at the meeting seemed initially hostile, the ratepayers "gradually attained a state of mind in apparent compliance with the remarks."⁷⁴ Five days later candidates similarly "ran the gauntlet of question and jibe, interruption and criticism" at a meeting held under the auspices of the Trade and Labour council. Commissioner Graves, the first called upon, said that he would abide by the ratepayers' verdict and would not oppose the armoury scheme if they desired the transfer. When asked by someone in the crowd (who was displeased that the plebiscite was limited to ratepayers), "Why not let us all have a chance at that corruption?," Mr. Graves replied that an open vote "would be putting a dangerous weapon into the hands of an unscrupulous class." Candidate Thomas Knight opposed the Mewata Park site outright, and E.D. Benson favoured the transfer as in the city's best interests. "Tappy" Frost was personally against giving up park property for building purposes, but he explained that he would vote in favour of the Mewata transfer in recognition that the previous council's promise must not be broken.⁷⁵ Various interest groups also spoke out during the campaign. The Trades and Labour Council, for instance, felt it prudent to again issue a strong statement against the transfer and advised its members to vote against it. Individuals voiced their opinions in letters to the editor to try and sway ratepayers to cast their vote in a particular direction.⁷⁶

⁷³ CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412.

⁷⁴ Herald, 2 December 1913, 5.

⁷⁵ Albertan, 6 December 1913, 1, 12.

⁷⁶ Herald, 1 December 1913, 1; Albertan, 1 December 1913, 1, 8. On letters to the editor see, for example, "Save Mewata Park for the Children," Albertan, 6 December 1913, 3; "Case of Armory Site Placed Before

The newspapers were, of course, heavily involved in canvassing points of view. *The Herald* denounced the “little coterie of anti-armory partizans” that had “turned loose their mud batteries in a last and deadly earnest attempt” to overturn the city’s promise as Sifton’s “servile legislature” had the month before. The editor was confident that, if the principle of the greatest good to the greatest number still held, the proposal to establish the armoury in a corner of Mewata Park would certainly be ratified.⁷⁷ *The Albertan*, perhaps sensing a defeat, escalated its onslaught into new areas. It not only opposed the erection of an armoury at Mewata Park, but now called into question the wisdom of spending vast sums of money on the military in general:

The *Albertan* believes that an expenditure of such an amount would be a lavish and inexcusable waste of money. A similar building would be erected in Edmonton, others in Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge. Before the province is thoroughly equipped, we shall have an outlay for armories alone of a million dollars at least. We have in Alberta 400,000 people. If the expenditure in the other provinces throughout Canada is equally generous, the total equipment for armories alone will be \$20,000,000. That is for the armories alone, without any expenditure for maintenance, or any payment for deterioration, and the annual interest charge is about one million dollars a year. The militia in 1912 numbered 18,872. The militia of Calgary does not number 300 men.⁷⁸

Under the circumstances and under any circumstances the expenditure is unnecessary and wasteful. The department of militia is doing its utmost to have Canada imitate the European nations and follow in their folly in the insane race for armies and armaments.

And it is unnecessary. From the Calgary drill hall no man will ever go forth for war. *This country will never be attacked and the mother country will not need our assistance in any great war* [emphasis mine]. The whole thing is one vast, foolish, fearful, terrible game.⁷⁹

Voters: Correspondent Speaks Plainly on Question and Gives Full History of Agitation,” *Albertan*, 8 December 1913, 12.

⁷⁷ *Herald*, 2 December 1913, 6; 1 December 1913, 6. The newspaper also passed along a message from Colonel Winters, the Minister of Militia’s military secretary, informing the public that it was the department’s policy to permit use of the building as an auditorium and public meeting place in all cases where the city provided a site. This helped the *Herald* assert that the armoury would be of “real public value” in Calgary. 6 December 1913, 1.

⁷⁸ This figure was clearly weighted to serve the paper’s point of view. A week and a half later the *Albertan* stated that “Calgary has about 700 volunteers.” 18 December 1913, 3.

⁷⁹ *Albertan*, 8 December 1913, 3. See also “Col. Sam’s Armed Forces,” 16 December 1913, 3, and “Excessive Expenditure,” 18 December 1913, 3.

This was a dramatic departure from previous statements that had avoided directly disparaging the military. The irony was that the *Albertan* had tried to exploit Calgarians' pride in the Canadian military during the 1911 election campaign when it criticized Bennett for not enlisting in the Boer War when the empire was pleading for volunteers.⁸⁰ More than likely this was a calculated, last minute effort by the Liberal journal to try and sway ratepayer opinion rather than a clear enunciation of genuine anti-military sentiment. Whatever the case, the *Albertan*'s attempt to garner a decisive "no" vote was in vain.

At the end of the 1913 municipal election, a majority of ratepayers in every polling division and sub-division in the city voted "yes" to the transfer of Mewata land to the federal government.⁸¹ Early reports concluded that 3664 had voted to donate the site for an armoury with only 1438 against.⁸² The result was indisputable and resounding. *The Herald* boasted that over seventy percent of voting ratepayers favoured granting the Mewata Park site for a "magnificent" armoury building. This verdict, it reflected, had a three-fold meaning:

It evidenced the desire of the citizens of this city to give the militia a square deal, it showed the appreciation of the public-spirited work of the militia. Second, the verdict was a complete repudiation of the tactics adopted by local political forces, headed by the Liberal organ, to keep the armory out of Calgary. Finally, the vote was a reminder to the Sifton government that its policy of handicapping Calgary at every turn is intolerable.

The city had demonstrated its faith and interest in the local militia, and had placed a higher priority on securing an armoury than on preserving the integrity of all of Mewata Park. The *Herald* felt that Council should call on the federal government to expropriate the property to circumvent any further delay.⁸³

In contrast, the *Albertan* did not inform readers of the ratepayers' verdict the day after the vote. In the days ahead it had "no hesitation in declaring that the fight for Mewata park should be continued without interruption because of the voting on

⁸⁰ Gray, *R.B. Bennett*, 121.

⁸¹ Election Results, 8 December 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 56, File #452 Election Returns, Oaths and Correspondence, 1913.

⁸² *Herald*, 9 December 1913, 1. The official figures state that the decision carried 3644 for, 1459 against. City of Calgary, *Municipal Handbook 1994*, 23.

⁸³ *Herald*, 9 December 1913, 6.

Monday.” The Liberal newspaper stated that the decision carried no legal weight; that a significant number had demonstrated their opposition to plans; and that a federal expropriation would be met by the “keenest possible opposition.”⁸⁴ Although the *Albertan* tried to rally the anti-Mewata forces to keep up their fight, the opposition waned in the weeks and months ahead. The vote had been decisive and most of the newly-elected city officials had issued support for the transfer during their campaigns. Even the anti-military rhetoric tapered off substantially in the weeks ahead. The anti-Mewata lobby had failed.

The newly elected Council was prepared to concede to the ratepayers’ desires. The morning after the election, Mayor Sinnott stated that the result of the armoury vote was now mandate. “While I have not personally investigated the legal details in the matter,” Sinnott told reporters, “there is no question in my mind that with both the vote of the council and an overwhelming mandate from the people in favor of placing the armoury in Mewata park, there is nothing now to prevent the building going there.” Almost all of the new council members had favoured the Mewata Park location for an armoury while on the public platform, and their full support was anticipated. At the first council meeting, Alderman H.B. Adshead, who had been one of the strongest opponents of locating the armoury in the park, expressed his belief that the armoury site was now settled. The will of the people was clear, he asserted, and the fight against the proposal should cease.⁸⁵

The City Solicitor was instructed to deal with Jason Muir, the federal government’s legal representative, to determine what steps the City needed to take to complete the transfer. For some months the process seemed to stagnate as the City awaited instructions from the federal government.⁸⁶ In mid-March 1914 the Mayor wrote to Bennett with words of encouragement. Satisfied that Council would “do anything within their power to transfer this property to the Government,” he advised that the matter should be “settled at the earliest opportunity, as most of the Council are willing at the

⁸⁴ *Albertan*, 10 December 1913, 3.

⁸⁵ *Herald*, 9 December 1913, 1; 10 December 1913, 9.

⁸⁶ *Herald*, 9 December 1913, 1; Council Meeting, 16 February 1914, p.86, CCA, Notes from City Clerks Council Minutes, reel CC 1, January 1910-May 1914.

present time, that the transfer should be made, and conditions might change.”⁸⁷ Bennett’s tone had, by this point, soured. His response to the mayor was less than optimistic:

The Department of Militia and Defence is now considering what is to be done in connection with the site at Mewata Park but, owing to financial conditions, I am perfectly frank in saying to you that there is no great desire on the part of anybody to spend money, and the interference with my plans of last year has very much disorganized the arrangements which I desired to make in connection with building operations at Calgary.⁸⁸

One of Bennett’s notable tactics was to catch the mayor with a blunt, threatening telegram or letter, immediately following it up with a more moderate one, business-like in tone, that prescribed what needed to be done to salvage matters. The same day, Bennett informed the mayor of DMD’s requirements for the site. He estimated that tenders for an armoury costing about three hundred thousand dollars (the largest possible given the site) would be called within two months of the Crown securing the site, and in this light he suggested to Sinnott that the latter “better have it staked defined and transferred” in short order.⁸⁹

Further correspondence did not ameliorate the situation, and Bennett’s frustration was becoming more and more apparent. Although Sinnott quickly informed the MP that the matter of the armoury would be “taken up at once,” he shortly thereafter wrote Bennett informing him that the plebiscite and Council vote only called for the transfer of some 90,000 sq. ft. This being smaller than DMD’s requirements, the mayor asked Bennett whether the lot required could be reduced to 225 ft in depth.⁹⁰ Bennett’s reply from Ottawa was a sharp rebuke:

Plebiscite asked for Willingness of citizens to grant about ninety thousand square feet to the crown for an armoury. Difference of ten thousand feet will not materially affect the question and no smaller area can be taken if we are to obtain a building equal to that now under construction at Regina

⁸⁷ Letter, City Clerk to City Solicitor, 16 December 1913, CCA, RG 26, Box 51, File #412; Letter, Mayor to Bennett, 10 March 1914, BoC, Box #47, File: Commissioners’ Correspondence with other Municipalities, M-P, 1914

⁸⁸ Letter, Bennett to Mayor Sinnott, 17 March 1914, BoC, Box #47, File: Commissioners’ Correspondence with other Municipalities, M-P, 1914.

⁸⁹ Telegram, Bennett to Mayor Sinnott, 17 April 1914, BoC, Box #47, File: Commissioners’ Correspondence with other Municipalities, M-P, 1914.

⁹⁰ Telegram, Mayor to Bennett, 18 April 1914; Telegram, Mayor to Bennett, 21 April 1914, BoC, Box #47, File: Commissioners’ Correspondence with other Municipalities, M-P, 1914.

and Edmonton. The original offer of council was for a site [four hundred by four hundred feet].... Your action last summer delayed construction one year. Do I understand that no further action is to be taken?

The Mayor's inability to overcome trivial details was killing the process. In typical fashion, Bennett followed up with another telegram later in the day, obviously confident that he had caught the Mayor's attention. He laid out in explicit legal terms to whom the land was to be transferred, and stated that the Department did not propose to file the plan but expected the "city to transfer the land describing same by metes and bounds after which order of council will be passed protecting city against possible difficulties in connection with restrictions under patent." The Mayor, sensing that Bennett would not tolerate further complications from Council, offered no further complaints. During the summer of 1914, yet another Council resolution was prepared and passed, this time formally authorizing the transfer of the Mewata Park land. Evidently, the legal issues were to be worked out later.⁹¹

The City fulfilled its end of the bargain. However, contrary to the *Albertan's* earlier prophecies that Canada would never be called upon to aid Britain, the winds of war blew into Canada in August 1914. From a military standpoint, the erection of armouries was relegated to secondary or tertiary importance. After all, most of the armouries and drill halls that Hughes had authorized since taking over as Minister were already complete and flooded with eager recruits. The new issue was how to obtain properties to train the large number of troops volunteering for overseas service. Although the City was finally prepared to move ahead on the Mewata Park project at this juncture, it was no longer a key priority of Bennett nor of his colleagues in Ottawa's political, military and bureaucratic corridors.

Now it was the City's turn to bemoan the lack of progress. At the 4 January 1915 Council meeting, Alderman Freeze questioned whether the Mayor or Commissioners had taken any steps to "induce" the federal government to commence construction of the armoury building. Commissioner Graves, who had visited Ottawa a few weeks before,

⁹¹ Two telegrams, Bennett to Mayor, 24 April 1914; Letter, Acting Mayor to City Clerk, 6 June 1914, BoC, Box #47, File: Commissioners' Correspondence with other Municipalities, M-P, 1914; Council Meeting, 6 July 1914, p. 489, Notes from City Clerks Council Minutes, reel CC 1, January 1910-May 1914.

replied that Bennett was hopeful the work would begin soon. If the daily press accounts of that evening were to be believed, the building would be started in the near future.⁹² In April, the plans for the armoury at Mewata arrived in the city and a portrait of the front elevation duly published in the *Herald*. Tenders were called and scheduled to close in late May. The *Herald* felt that it was “an exceedingly handsome structure” that would bring a great deal of money into the community. The newspaper spared no praise for Bennett and his efforts to secure the armoury, assuring readers that it was “something really worth waiting for.”⁹³ The waiting continued. That summer, businesses began to ask City officials who had been awarded the contract for the armoury. The best response that the City could muster was that it was unaware of any party having been awarded the contract and suggested that the company watch the papers and await a public announcement. They would have to wait through another round the next year. Although sixteen companies had tendered the project and federal funds had been allocated for the project, legal ambiguities continued to delay decision-making.⁹⁴

In early 1916 the transfer of Mewata Park to the Crown had still not been registered, but construction appeared imminent. The Militia referred the whole matter to the Department of Justice in Ottawa in July 1915 but it was still not settled. Nevertheless, Justice requested that the streets and avenues within the park be closed by judge’s order. Council did not object.⁹⁵ On 27 March the federal government finally obtained the Certificate of Title to the land and filed it with the City Clerk, and the following month Cabinet passed an order-in-council authorizing the transfer for the nominal sum of \$1.00. Construction could finally begin. After another call for tenders, a

⁹² Council Meeting, 4 January 1915, p. 9, Notes from City Clerks Council Minutes, reel CC 1, January 1910-May 1914.

⁹³ *Herald*, 14 April 1915, 6; 17 April 1915, 1; 19 April 1915, 6.

⁹⁴ Letter, D.R. McDougall, Kootenay Granite and Monumental Co. Ltd., Nelson, BC, to Mayor Costello, Calgary, 15 July 1915; Letter, Mayor to McDougall, 20 July 1915, BoC, Box #60, File: Commissioners’ Out of Town Correspondence, D-P, 1915; DPW Main Estimates, 1916-17, Alberta-Public Buildings-Calgary-Drill Hall, NAC, RG 11, vol. 3164, No. 5.

⁹⁵ Letter, City Solicitor to Mayor and Commissioners, re: Mewata Park, 3 March 1916, BoC, Box #63, File: Commissioners’ Correspondence with City Solicitor, D-N, 1916; Commissioner’s Report, 4 March 1916, p. 97, Notes from City Clerks Council Minutes, reel CC2, June 1914-December 1916.

contract was let to A.G. Creelman Company of Vancouver on 12 September 1916 with completion of the armoury scheduled for the fall of 1918.⁹⁶

When the finished building was turned over to the army on 24 September 1918, Bennett must have been pleased with his accomplishment. The armoury stood proudly in Mewata Park as he had envisioned, its Tudor and Gothic revival architecture resembling a medieval fortress or castle and embodying a romantic military ethos. Although Thomas W. Fuller of the Chief Architect's Branch of Public Works (who was in charge of federal drill hall designs from 1904 to 1918) had designed the building,⁹⁷ he had modified the typical drill hall design of the period for the Mewata site and the project had been supervised locally by Calgary architect Leo Dowler. The local influence was indisputable. The building incorporated local brick and local sandstone on a cut stone foundation. According to some sources, construction had been delayed due to a brick shortage and as a result two brick factories (one in Redcliffe and one in Montgomery) were established for the specific purpose of providing the requisite number to complete the project.⁹⁸ City Council had continued to be involved in the project even after the site had been transferred and construction was underway. In November 1916 a Council resolution carried which stipulated that Bennett be approached to ensure that "all the stone to be used in the erection of the New Armoury be purchased in the Calgary district, and wrought by local labour."⁹⁹ The following summer, construction having been temporarily suspended, Council unanimously pushed for work to be resumed and resolved that Senator Lougheed and Bennett be acquainted with the City Building Inspector's suggestions for certain "in-expensive alterations in the plans" which would greatly increase the seating capacity and "materially improve" the acoustic properties.

⁹⁶ BoC, Box #63, File: Commissioners' Correspondence with City Solicitor, D-N, 1916; Ivan J. Saunders, "Mewata Drill Hall," Building Report 83-82, 23 July 1984, Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office, 4-5; Dominion of Canada, Sessional Papers, 1917, Vol. LII, Auditor General's Report, 1915-16, Public Works Department: Expenditure, V-43; DPW Main Estimates, 1916-17, Alberta-Public Buildings-Calgary-Drill Hall, NAC, RG 11, vol. 3164, No. 5.

⁹⁷ Margaret Archibald, By Federal Design: The Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works, 1881-1914 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1983), 30-31; Jack Peach, "No matter how it's spelled, Mewata's an enigma," Calgary Herald, 27 July 1985.

⁹⁸ Jennifer Bobrovitz, "Armoury loaded with history," Calgary Herald, 18 May 1997.

⁹⁹ Council Meeting, 13 November 1916, 575, Notes from City Clerks Council Minutes, reel CC2, June 1914-December 1916.

The services of the Building Inspector were also placed at the disposal of the Federal Government for the project.¹⁰⁰ Finally, the City directly assisted in putting the final touches on the Armoury. The contractors asked the City to pave the court and gun-room within the Armory with sheet asphalt, a task which the Councillors graciously accepted.¹⁰¹ For all the pressures that the City had faced, and all the strains on federal-municipal relations that had accompanied the project, the magnificent building was complete.

Evidently, based on Annual Reports by Parks and Recreation officials in Calgary, Mewata did not cease to function as a public park with the militia's presence. As the majority of ratepayers had evidently believed, the military and citizens could cohabit the grounds in a mutually respectful manner. Sports facilities were improved and playgrounds expanded, even while the armoury was being built and then used. A 1918 letter from the President of City Baseball League praised the baseball facilities and equipment at Mewata as the best in Canada so far as the municipal playgrounds were concerned.¹⁰² In a 1965 article in the *Albertan*, journalist Tom Moore reflected that ever since the armoury was built it had "bulged" with activity that was not confined to the military. It was the scene of important boxing matches. Ball games were played on its big parade floor, the same floor on which the game of badminton got its start in Calgary and the B'nai B'rith staged charity bazaars. The armoury was used for indoor track meets, famous riflemen burned powder on its rifle ranges, and a Calgary boy scout team once won a British Commonwealth championship in the same place. The dining room had hosted the Prince of Wales and prime ministers. Moore concluded that the armoury's:

central location has been one of its major advantages - not only for its special projects but for its day-in-day-out cadet and militia activity that would probably fall off considerably if it were moved to the outskirts of the city. Although it may be old-fashioned in appearance, ... Mewata

¹⁰⁰ Council Meeting, 23 July 1917, p. 362, Notes from City Clerks Council Minutes, reel CC 3, January 1917-Dec 1919; Letter, Mayor (?) to Bennett, 28 July 1917 (only the first page of the letter exists), BoC, Box #77, File: Commissioners' Out of Town Correspondence, A-G, July-Dec. 1917.

¹⁰¹ Commissioners' Report, 31 August 1918, p. 2; Council Meeting, 3 September 1918, Notes from City Clerks Council Minutes, reel CC 3, January 1917-Dec 1919.

¹⁰² Annual Report 1919 - Parks and Recreation, p. 2, CCA, RGA 23, Box #1, Annual Reports, G83-19, File #7.

Armories is a tremendous community centre for which Calgary has no substitute. To tear it down to make room for something else, no matter how worthy the other project may be, would be a tragedy that would affect thousands of Calgarians for many years to come.¹⁰³

His analysis was a fitting rebuttal to the argument his predecessors at the *Albertan* had made some fifty years earlier. The armoury was indeed accessible to the public and fit nicely into civic consciousness. In the late 1980s a *Calgary Herald* journalist was comfortable calling it one of the “most loved landmarks” in a city that cherished its military connection.¹⁰⁴

The public debate over the Mewata Park armoury site sheds light on the significant constraints and conflicting demands that a myriad of community institutions, groups and individuals place upon municipal and federal decision-makers. Both the federal and provincial governments had partisan interests and used their powers to influence the process according to their designs. They also had to deal with an active City Council in Calgary that not only forwarded its own agenda but had to delicately balance conflicting interests in the community. Community interest groups forged alliances and joined in coalitions with other organizations on an issue and partisan political basis, and their points of view were disseminated by and debated in the local media. Municipal politicians, in turn, were engaged in divisive public debate and acted according to personal conviction and pragmatic consideration. If, as Tindal and Tindal noted, discussions of intergovernmental relations affecting municipalities tend to portray the municipal level as “passive observer” dictated to by the province or adversely affected by inconsiderate federal action, then this case study suggests that they can also be considerable influences on federal development plans in their own right.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *Albertan*, 13 April 1965. For another description of military and community activities hosted at Mewata Armoury see “Dedication of Mewata Armouries,” *The Roundup*, 6 March 1980, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Patrick Tivy in *Calgary Herald*, 6 October 1989, B2. On 11 November 1979, Mewata Armoury was declared a Provincial Historic Resource (the dedication ceremony was held on 9 March 1980) and on 11 May 1991 it was declared a National Historic Site, only the fourth building in Calgary to receive a national designation. See 1980 Dedication Ceremony booklet, DHH 80/188; “Dedication of Mewata Armouries,” *The Roundup*, 6 March 1980, 7; undated 1979 article by Lindsay Taylor, “Mewata Armories dedication is a homecoming for veterans,” Calgary Public Library, Clipping File - Mewata Armoury; *Calgary Herald*, 10 May 1991.

¹⁰⁵ Tindal and Tindal, *Local Government in Canada*, 229.

While group dynamics are important to understanding political decision-making, political parties, governments and interest groups are first and foremost comprised of individuals. Donald Creighton once characterized the pursuit of Canadian history as the need to look at issues in terms of individuals and unique circumstances rather than broad forces:

I think that an historian's chief interest is in character and in circumstance. His concern is to discover the hopes, fears, anticipations and intentions of the individuals and nations he is writing about. His task is to reproduce as best as he can the circumstances, problems and situations faced by another person in another time. He seeks insight and understanding that cannot be gained through application of sociological rules and general explanations.¹⁰⁶

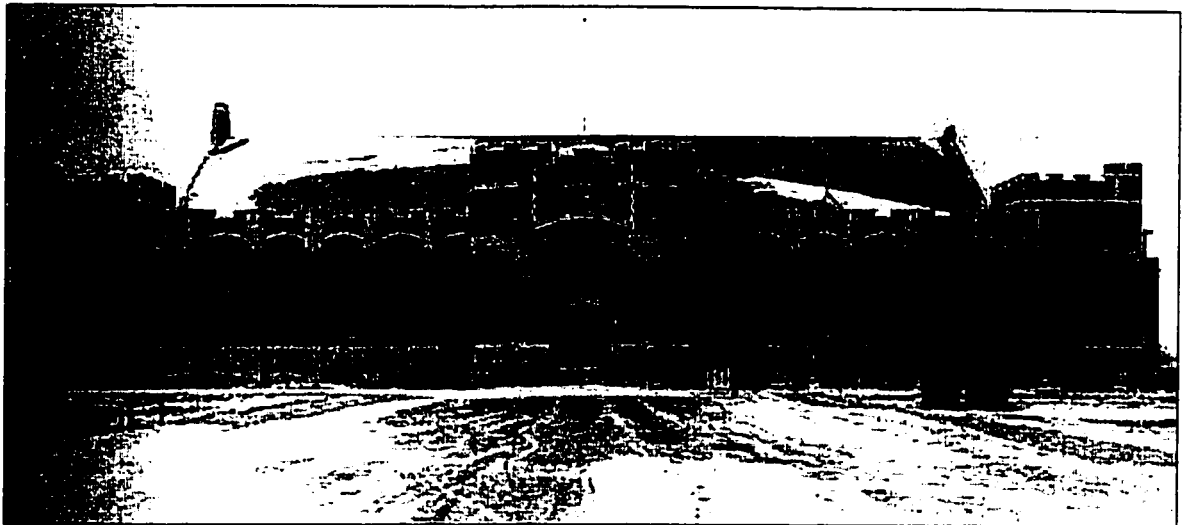
Creighton's notion of "character and circumstance" provides a useful framework for understanding the Mewata Armoury controversy. Defence Minister Sam Hughes' desire to foster a sense of community-military camaraderie and, at the same time, reward loyal constituencies, meant that Calgary was shortlisted for an armoury. With Bennett as the city's representative in Ottawa, the requisite political lobbying was handled at the federal level. For a lesser man than Bennett, the public opposition and problems experienced in obtaining the desired space in Mewata Park facility would have been enough to justify choosing another site. But R.B. wanted Mewata and he laboured to get it, even though the Mayor and City Council dragged their heels and sat on the proverbial political fence for as long as they possibly could. His repeated urgings compelled council to dispense with its waffling and accept his agenda or face the consequences. As a result of his pressure and Council's apt political decision to hold a plebiscite, a bold building stood at the place both he and Hughes had wanted, but the cost of time and effort was expensive.

If a significant minority of Calgary's population was opposed to the armoury project in 1913, the war likely dissipated much of the wariness regarding the militia. Calgary's high enlistment rates became a source of civic pride, and the armoury was a visible reminder that war had become a part of Calgarians' consciousness. In the 1930s, with the Depression holding the Prairies in its grip, Bennett was now the Prime Minister

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in *Character and Circumstance: Essays in Honour of Donald Grant Creighton*, Ed. John S. Moir (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970), v.

of Canada. He had proven during his first term as an MP that he could deliver a military development project to Calgary and see it through, even in the face of adversity from the City and local interest groups. He now adopted an even more ambitious scheme to offer his loyal constituents a margin of relief from the Depression. Bennett must not have been surprised when, once again, proposals and plans for a military project divided Calgarians and precipitated a cacophony of public and political opposition.

Figure 8: Mewata Armoury, Calgary, circa 1918¹⁰⁷



¹⁰⁷ NAC, PA-53020.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLITICS, PATRONAGE, AND A PRECARIOUS PUBLIC:

R.B. BENNETT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CURRIE BARRACKS

R.B. Bennett's political stock rose in value during the interwar period, although it was a somewhat tumultuous climb to the top. His forceful personality and high expectations were not always conducive to constructive relations with his colleagues, and his relationship with Prime Minister Robert Borden was less than amicable. When Borden decided not to appoint him either to the Cabinet or to the Senate during the First World War, a disgruntled Bennett refused to stand for re-election in 1917. He did not enter the government for four years, until Arthur Meighen (Borden's successor) named



him Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Unfortunately for Bennett, he was defeated in his bid for Calgary West that year (losing to a Labor candidate by a mere sixteen votes) as the Liberals took over the reins of office in Ottawa. The constituents of Calgary West again returned Bennett as their MP in 1925, and he became Minister of Finance during the short-lived Conservative government of 1926. The following year, at

Figure 9: R.B. Bennett¹ the Conservative Party's first national leadership convention, Bennett was elected to lead the party. With a well-oiled political machine at his disposal (which publicized him as the saviour of the party) and a downturn in the Canadian economy, Bennett and the Conservatives were poised to topple King's Liberals. After a very successful election campaign in 1930, the Tories secured federal control. Bennett, the man whom Ernest Watkins characterized as "moody, unstable, solitary, insecure, and neurotic," and that Michael Bliss described as "erratic, emotional, insensitive, conceited, self-obsessed, ... bombastic and pompous," had finally reached the

¹ Portrait circa 1933, NAC, C-7731.

top of the political mountain.² The view before Bennett was less than picturesque, for he had reached the summit of federal power at an inopportune juncture in Canada's history.

Bennett had the misfortune to take the helm of the nation at its darkest hour. In late 1929 the floor of the stock market collapsed, and the industrialized world slipped into the grip of depression. When Bennett assumed office on 7 August 1930, the fortunes of the nation continued to spiral downward. The Prairies were hit especially hard, shattered by the twin terrors of economic collapse and a devastating drought. The City of Calgary, the Prime Minister's own riding, was among the hardest hit in North America. Unemployment soared as young men and women made their way to the metropolitan centre to try and find work that was not there.³ Political leaders viewed the young unemployed men as an ominous threat. They represented an unpredictable element that was particularly disconcerting in light of the socialist rhetoric circulating after the Great War – "an age," as Gerald Friesen characterized, "when political violence and social upheaval were far from unknown."⁴ To make matters worse, there was no free market solution in sight.

The unemployment situation in Canada grew considerably worse in the early thirties. Responsibility for unemployment relief lay squarely on the shoulders of the municipalities with some assistance from the provinces, but there were limits to what they could accomplish. Half a million Canadians had no jobs in June 1931, and the low point of 783,000 unemployed was reached in 1933.⁵ By 1932 the situation was far beyond the capacities of local and provincial resources,⁶ and the Bennett administration devised several federal schemes to help ease some of the burden. Their main focus was the

² Michael Bliss, Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Mulroney (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), 113, 110, see also 107-21; Ernest Watkins, R.B. Bennett: A Biography (London: Secker & Warburg, 1963); James H. Gray, R.B. Bennett: The Calgary Years (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); John R. Williams, The Conservative Party of Canada, 1920-1949 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1956), 53-6, 207-09. On the 1927 national leadership convention see Larry A. Glassford, "Winning the West: R.B. Bennett and the Conservative Breakthrough on the Prairies, 1927-1930," Prairie Forum 13/1 (Spring 1988), 67-82.

³ See, for example, Alberta Relief Commission report on scores of destitute, single unemployed men in Calgary, Calgary Herald, 5 October 1933, NAC, RG 24, Volume 3048, HQ 1376-11-11 (Vol. 1).

⁴ Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 398.

⁵ Figures from John Swettenham, McNaughton Vol. 1: 1887-1939 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1968), 269.

⁶ A brief overview of the dismal state of Calgary in late 1932 is provided in Max Foran, "Four Faces of Calgary," Alberta History 27/1 (Winter 1979), 7-8.

70,000 homeless, single, unemployed men in the country. The Department of National Defence was the only federal ministry with the administrative and technical capacity to deal with such a large number of men, and the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton proposed that unemployment relief camps be set up to provide manual labour jobs. Works projects were devised by the department that “would be of future benefit to the country, would involve the least possible expenditure for property, equipment and materials, ... and furthermore would not upset local plans for immediate development and thus increase the unemployment by stopping normal expenditure on construction.”⁷ The first of these “Unemployment Relief” construction projects began in the fall of 1932.

Another of the Bennett administration’s reactions to the Depression was cost cutting. The Department of National Defence was one of the hardest hit federal institutions. In 1932 estimated allotments for the non-permanent active militia were cut by more than a quarter from the previous year, and the following fiscal period Treasury Board proposed that the militia estimates be further reduced below levels that were already the lowest this century. The Royal Canadian Air Force and Royal Canadian Navy fared even worse. At the same time, ominous German growth in Europe under Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime had led a hesitant British Government to revoke its ten-year rule. A major war within ten years could no longer be ruled out, and by 1934 the imperial centre began to rearm. In November 1934, Bennett told the annual Conference of Defense Associations meeting in Ottawa that the British ministers he had met with overseas were frantically concerned about German rearmament (that appeared to be on par with British plans) and the concomitant deterioration in the international situation.⁸ Nevertheless, historian James Eayrs explained how the cleavage between diminishing federal commitment to the militia and mounting concern over Europe continued to exacerbate:

⁷ A.J. Kerry and W.A. McDill, The History of the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers Vol. 1: 1749-1939 (Ottawa: Military Engineers Association of Canada, 1962), 305. For an overview of Canadian perspectives on foreign policy during the 1930s see Robert Bothwell and Norman Hillmer, eds., The In-Between Time: Canadian External Policy in the 1930s (Vancouver: Copp Clark, 1975). On McNaughton see Chapter 8: “Unemployment Relief” of John Swettenham’s biography McNaughton vol. 1, 269-285.

⁸ James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada: From the Great War to the Great Depression (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 317; Robert Bothwell and Norman Hillmer, eds., The In-Between Time: Canadian External Policy in the 1930s (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1975), 142.

The increased tempo of military activity abroad had little effect upon the military affairs of the Dominion. The Prime Minister remained indifferent to the dilapidated condition of the country's defence forces, and took no interest in the activities of the Department of National Defence with the exception of its unemployment relief camps and the construction of new barracks in and about his home town of Calgary. In this latter project his interest was intense, even obsessive.⁹

Although Bennett had climbed the political ladder, he remained committed to the local Calgary military. After the Great War Bennett was made honorary colonel-in-chief of the Calgary Highlanders and he in turn furnished the regimental band with its requisite instruments.¹⁰ He always prided himself on his hard-earned achievement in securing the Mewata Armoury, the "only public building contracted in Canada except for war purposes between 1914 and 1918,"¹¹ and the presence of the headquarters of MD 13 in the community. However, realities of the early postwar period meant that the armoury was never fully utilized as had been intended. Headquarters and "B" Squadron of Lord Strathcona's Horse (along with their offices, stores and kitchen) occupied much of the building from 1920 to 1936 because of the absence of space for the permanent force regiment in the city. Their horses were sheltered in stables rented from the City on adjacent land. The militia units (for whom the armoury had been built) found themselves relegated to the dungy armoury basement.¹²

During the 1920s the Department of National Defence had repeatedly noted that general permanent force accommodations were "most unsatisfactory, ... out of date, cramped, inconvenient from an administrative point of view, and in some cases unhealthy," but had not adopted a program of barracks construction due to the limited sums voted for National Defence.¹³ Conditions at Calgary were a particular concern. Although improvements were suggested for existing wooden stables, the military

⁹ Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, 317.

¹⁰ Gray, *R.B. Bennett*, 160.

¹¹ Telegram to Mayor Davison from R.B. Bennett, 28 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, reel M1459, 501090.

¹² Harry Saunders, "Currie Barracks: Background History," 1 (City of Calgary, Planning and Building Department); Jack Peach, "Garrison Town," n.d., Museum of Regiments, Historical File "Barracks." Peach's article is of varied quality, falsely claiming for example that the Lord Strathcona's Horse were the intended occupants of Mewata Armoury.

¹³ Report of the Department of National Defence Canada for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31 1927 (Militia and Air Services) (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1927), 59.

recognized that the existing accommodations at Mewata Armoury were only temporary and that the construction of fireproof buildings was required.¹⁴ Undoubtedly, Calgary was without adequate military property and infrastructure by the 1930s.

In the context of the Depression, Bennett embraced the needs of the military force in Calgary as a means of injecting some much needed capital into his constituency. The military authorities in Military District No. 13 had been lobbying for a proper barracks for a long time. Local newspapers echoed this appeal as early as 1919. In the winter and spring of 1934, the Calgary Board of Trade, Calgary East M.P. Dr. G. Stanley, and the Minister of National Defence proposed the construction of a military barracks in the city.¹⁵ Although the Calgary barracks project had not been mentioned by the National Construction Council of Canada in its suggestions for works that year, in the spring of 1934 it quietly made its way onto the list of military buildings earmarked for unemployment relief. Before Bennett's latest relief plan was presented to Parliament the proposed site for a permanent force barracks at Calgary had already been surveyed. Acquisition was reported to be "under negotiation" and there was "no difficulty anticipated in immediate acquisition." The plans and specifications for construction were ready (modified only slightly from plans prepared for a barracks at Long Point, Ontario), and it was expected that grading and excavation of the barracks property could be started within a month. The first step was getting the necessary federal legislation and appropriation in place. With a prime minister spearheading the proposed project, this was easily accomplished.¹⁶

¹⁴ Report of the Department of National Defence Canada for the Fiscal Years Ending March 31 1929, March 31 1931, and March 31 1932 (Militia and Air Services) (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1929, 1931, 1932).

¹⁵ Calgary Herald, 18 June 1919 (see also various articles in Glenbow Library clipping file "Canada. Army. Lord Strathcona's Horse," especially "Barracks for Strathcona Horse" discussing an early plan and appropriation of funds to build quarters and a school for the permanent force regiment at the old Industrial School site); Letter, Secy, Calgary Board of Trade, to Dr. Stanley, 31 January 1934; Personal letter, Stanley to Hon. H.A. Stewart, Minister of Public Works, 1 March 1934; Letter, Stewart to Stanley, 3 March 1934; Public Works Estimates 1934-35, 5 July 1934, NAC, RG 11, Vol. 4038, File 2513-7. As Harry Saunders explained in his research report on Currie Barracks, it is rumoured that Bennett himself proposed the development of a Permanent Force Barracks for Calgary in 1933. However, no primary source documentation has been identified to confirm this suggestion. Saunders, "Currie Barracks."

¹⁶ The NCCC did not propose that any federal funds be spent in Calgary. Of the total Dominion expenditures proposed, only \$340,000 was suggested for Alberta out of \$21,291,800 total (only Manitoba was less at \$300,000; SK \$1,700,000; BC \$950,000; ON \$9,075,000; NB \$1,750,000). Works Proposed by National Construction Council of Canada under date of 15 January, 1934; "List of Military Buildings noted for Unemployment Relief, 1934-35," undated memorandum; Confidential Memorandum, 19 April 1934;

The Bennett administration met the Calgary military's need on 19 June 1934 when it announced the first of the Public Works Construction Acts (PWCAs). Colonel A.J. Kerry and Major W.A. Madill of the Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE) described the purpose of the acts as follows:

These were designed to put the building trades back upon their feet and so decrease the number of the unemployed, particularly amongst those who were married. These Acts put under the control of the Department of National Defence, and so under the R.C.E., the "administration, management, construction and erection "of a considerable number of large projects of a type which had previously been handled directly by the Department of Public Works.¹⁷

Bennett announced in the House that nearly \$40,000,000 was to be spent "for the purpose of public works undertakings throughout the dominion from the Atlantic to the Pacific."¹⁸ The Prime Minister's home city of Calgary was one of the major recipients, slated for an appropriation of about \$1,500,000, including \$1,200,000 for the construction of a permanent force barracks and military airfield. Mayor Andrew Davison of Calgary indicated to *The Albertan* that this announcement was no surprise to him, "but it is good news. It means that headquarters for Military District No. 13 are a permanent fixture so far as Calgary is concerned."¹⁹ Such certainty was soon cast into doubt.

The military was prepared to move quickly. On 22 June 1934, Brigadier Matthews and Colonel Stewart of the Department of National Defence appeared before the Calgary City Lands Committee and outlined the Federal Government's proposal for acquiring land for the construction of the barracks. The Committee discussed the matter "at some considerable length but was unable to arrive at any definite settlement thereof

Draft Reference Schedule "A" of PWCA, 1934, dated 19 June 1934, Item: Barracks for P.F. at Calgary, NAC, McNaughton, MG 30 E 133, CGS Files, Vol. 15A - Public Works Construction Acts, Public Work Construction Act 1934 (McN(M) 81). Letter, L.R. Lafleche, DM, DND, to DM, DPW, 28 March 1934; Memorandum, Charles Sellens, District Resident Architect, DPW, Calgary, to T.W. Fuller, Chief Architect, DPW, Ottawa, 10 April 1934, NAC, RG 11, Vol. 4308, File 2513-7.

¹⁷ Kerry and Madill, *History of the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers*, 304-5.

¹⁸ House of Commons, *Debates*, 19 June 1934, 4104-5.

¹⁹ "\$1,200,000 Calgary Project Planned: Barracks, Airport to be Erected," *Calgary Albertan*, 20 June 1934, 1. Andrew Davison served as a pay sergeant overseas during the First World War, and managed and edited "The Alberta Veteran" upon his return. He was an alderman in Calgary from 1922-26 and again in 1929, before becoming mayor from 1930-1945. A brief biography of Davison, who was popularly known as the "singing mayor" for his propensity to break into Irish song, is provided by John Leslie in "Calgary

and in consequence is referring the matter to Council for instructions as to whether or not the Committee is to proceed on the alternative matters relating to the proposal.”²⁰

The project was far from a *fait accompli*. Despite the dismal state of the Calgary economy during the Depression, when many constituents were scrambling for work, Bennett’s proposal was not greeted with unanimous jubilation. While some local groups issued immediate support for the project, others vehemently denounced the scheme as militaristic, a misappropriation of funds, and a threat to civic spirit with the potential to degrade their city to a “garrison town.” Emotions ran high as local interests responded to a federal proposal that would affect their lives and their immediate surroundings.

On the evening of Friday 22 June, a “hurriedly-called conference of antagonist groups” met to oppose the project. Their press release called for a postponement until citizens had time to consider the proposal, express their opinions, and “the will of the people” became known. The participants decreed that the expenditure of money on barracks and an airport was “calculated to increase the military spirit, was “quite out of harmony with the growing sentiment for peace,” and was sure to be opposed by peace-minded individuals and organizations. The most consummate critics of the project proved to be women’s organizations. Mrs. Harvey Price, who had previously sat in the Alberta Legislature as Miss Roberta McAdams, was joined by Mrs. W. Salt of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union in the belief that such an outlay of federal monies would be better used for housing or a veterans hospital. Mrs. E.J. Thoriakson, an executive member of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), expressed her belief that barracks development was an affront to a recent mass meeting of city churches that denounced war, and felt that only “socially beneficial” work should be recognized. Miss Rachael Coutts of the Calgary Branch of the WILPF opposed the project for its military tinge [see appendix F] as did Mrs. F.E. Wyman of the Calgary Local United Farm Women’s Association, and Mrs. F.G. Grevett, president of the Local

Authors,” *Past and Present: People, Places and Events in Calgary* (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975), 175-76.

²⁰ Minutes of Calgary City Lands Committee meeting, 22 June 1934, City of Calgary Archives (CCA), City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (July 33-July 35), 686.

Council of Women, who felt that it was an “outrageous” proposal lacking in imagination.²¹

Social Credit and the labour movement also voiced their opposition at a meeting the same night. “The building of barracks in Calgary may be just the first step in preparing for a dictatorship,” future premier William Aberhart warned in an address to the Calgary Worker’s Federation.²² His accompanying exposition on the Douglas system was embraced by Federation executive Eric Poole, who offered that it was “not soldiers, tanks and cavalry we want, it’s human sympathy - more humanity in government.” The organization sent a letter to the Prime Minister to go on record as protesting the expenditure “while so many families are without proper housing accommodations and many children are suffering from malnutrition, and lack of proper clothing.” In its place, the members requested that the entire \$1,200,000 appropriation “be spent on a public works program as designated by the City of Calgary, and which it will give a maximum number of man hours of labour to the Citizens of Calgary at rates of, wages not less than that paid by the City of Calgary, for various declassifications of work.” It should not only benefit the individual citizens who received work, but “should be of the greatest possible benefit to all of the Citizens of Calgary as a whole.”²³

The barracks proposal and the reactions and suggestions of local interest groups were the subject of intense discussion at the 25 June Calgary City Council meeting. Alderman W.A. Lincoln lost a motion to have the issue laid on the table for two weeks until Mayor Andrew Davison obtained more information. Instead, a motion carried 9-3

²¹ Unnamed telegram to Bennett, 28 June 1934, National Archives of Canada (NAC), Bennett Papers, M1459, 501093; “Fate of Military Works Project is in Balance,” Calgary Albertan, 23 June 1934, 1, 18. On Roberta McAdams, who became the only woman ever elected by the Armed Service’s vote in 1917, see “Woman MLA Made History,” Calgary Herald, 14 January 1967. Several historians have made the link between women’s peace organizations and the socialist movement during this period. In Calgary, for example, Rachel Coutts actively promoted the CCF in Calgary as well as participating in the peace movement. “Feminist-pacifist-socialist activism” is identified and described by Socknat in “For Peace and Freedom,” 70-73, 79.

²² Numerous groups in the Alberta Social Credit League met 29 June to protest the proposed project, and unanimously passed that the money could be “beneficially used” in a work program including adequate protection to soldiers’ widows and orphans, road building, and the development of natural resources. Telegram from Alice L. Grevett, V.P., J.R. Boon, Acting Secretary, Alberta Social Credit League, to Bennett, 30 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501099.

²³ Letter, E. Fairbanks (Secretary) and Attendry (Pres.) of Calgary Workers Federation to R.B., 22 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501077.

instructing the Mayor to wire Bennett and inform the Prime Minister that there was “considerable feeling and opposition to the proposed expenditure for the Department of National Defence in this City of \$1,200,000.00 for that particular purpose.” Bennett was asked to “give consideration to the building of an hospital for the purpose of caring for returned men and in such a location that may meet the City’s needs at some future time.” The next day, Mayor Davison sent a telegram to Ottawa along these lines.²⁴

Council was swayed by opponents of the scheme, but public opinion in the city was evidently mixed. A “Citizen’s Committee,” who had previously voiced their protest to City Council over the project, sent a letter of “thanks and appreciation” to the City Clerk on 27 June. It felt certain that “there is in Calgary a widespread but inarticulate body of opinion which is unalterably opposed to the project,” and expressed its hope that Council would support its submission of “useful alternative proposals for the expenditure of public money in Calgary.”²⁵ However, not all were disillusioned about the project’s merits. On 27 June Bennett received a telegram from John Wilson of the Construction Industry Association stating his organization’s appreciation of the construction scheme, and urged that the barracks be erected as early as possible in order that men engaged in building industry could be “employed in work of constructive character.” He noted that opposition in Calgary was “strongly depreciating,” and respectfully asked that the Prime Minister take no notice of the voices against the project.²⁶ The same day, the Calgary Board of Trade sent a telegram to the Prime Minister in Ottawa informing him that they had “unanimously passed a resolution expressing deep appreciation and thanks” for his efforts at an emergency meeting held on 25 June. F. E. Spooner, the president of the Board of Trade, sent telegrams to the MP for Calgary East (Stanley) and the Prime Minister informing them that the *Calgary Herald* had issued a headline that “Abandonment of Barracks plan here is not threatened by Ottawa.” He requested that something should be done to show the people that if the barracks were not to be built in

²⁴ Minutes of Calgary City Council meeting, 25 June 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 653; Telegram, Mayor A. Davison to Bennett, 26 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501079-80.

²⁵ Christina Leslie, Secretary, Citizen’s Committee, to J.M. Miller, City Clerk, 27 June 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 711.

²⁶ Telegram from John Wilson, Construction Industry Association, to R.B. Bennett, Recd 27 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501081.

Calgary they would be built elsewhere. Spooner had consulted with Mayor Davison who now believed that if the City was advised that “plans were decided upon after careful study and cannot now be changed and that work will proceed elsewhere if Calgary does not accept it, that City Council will rescind previous telegram. All shades of Political thought much appreciate what you [Bennett] are endeavouring to do for Calgary.”²⁷ The Board of Trade’s proposed course of action was wise counsel to the Prime Minister in Ottawa.

Bennett must have been confused. On the same day he received the discomfoting telegram from the Calgary mayor, he was receiving letters of appreciation from constituents. Whatever the winds of opposition in Alberta, the Prime Minister had his mind made up, and he responded in resolute fashion on 28 June. He knew what he wanted, and made sure City Council was aware that they were playing with fire:

We have given careful consideration to your message indicating that City Council has decided that it does not wish an expenditure of One Million Two Hundred Thousand Dollars to be made in Calgary for Barracks for the permanent force. This undertaking appeared to be the only Federal work upon which substantial expenditures could be made providing work for skilled and unskilled labour. Proposals contemplate construction of at least eleven units for which separate contracts with appropriate provisions for domestic employment could be made. In view however of action taken by your City Council I propose to move when Public Works Bill is in Committee that there be added to the Statute words that will permit of the appropriation being utilized elsewhere in Alberta than in the City of Calgary.²⁸

Bennett reminded the City Councillors of his struggle to secure the Militia Headquarters for Calgary and the accomplishment of having Mewata Armoury built during the First World War. The Armoury, he explained, was intended for use by the militia but, owing to the absence of suitable barracks for the permanent force, had never fulfilled its intent. This was a critical consideration according to the Prime Minister. Despite the probability “that a unit of the permanent force will always be maintained between Winnipeg and the mountains,” there was no guarantee that this would always be Calgary. If opposition

²⁷ Telegram from F.E. Spooner, Calgary Board of Trade, to Dr. G.D. Stanley, MP, 28 June 1934; telegram from Spooner to Bennett, 28 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501086-7.

²⁸ Telegram to Mayor Davison from R.B. Bennett, 28 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, reel M1459, 501090; CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 703.

persisted to the erection of the barracks, then they would be built elsewhere and the “unit will necessarily be maintained in the city where the barracks are erected and undoubtedly Militia Headquarters will be transferred to same city.” He finished with a plea to missed opportunities of the past. Calgary had lost both the capital and the university when Alberta became a province in 1905, and Bennett warned that “Council must accept full responsibility with corresponding loss of payroll and the incidental benefits therefrom” if the barracks project went elsewhere and the permanent force and Militia Headquarters moved.²⁹

Bennett’s transmission, and the manner in which it was transcribed by the City Clerk, was revealing in both its tone and substance. Bennett made certain that the Council realized the extent of what it was rejecting. He turned their attention to the efforts he had made to bring the military district headquarters to Calgary. Jurisdictional issues were used as a means of showing how the City officials’ recommendations would be unworkable. In an overall threatening tone, the Prime Minister elucidated the myriad of costs, or rather missed opportunity costs, that would be borne by the city should council go ahead with its opposition, making sure to place responsibility squarely on the shoulders of Council. The next day the front page of *The Calgary Albertan* shouted “\$1,200,000 Barracks Could Go Elsewhere, R.B. Bennett Warns.”

Bennett’s message was understood in the corridors of Calgary municipal power. The Mayor of Calgary now sent the Prime Minister a telegram informing him that he no longer held an objection to the barracks project and asked Bennett to withhold any action until Saturday morning as the Mayor rushed home from the Union of Alberta Municipalities conference in Edmonton.³⁰ Bennett, however, had a point to make along the lines suggested by Mr. Spooner. To suggest that Calgary could really lose the proposed construction project, Bennett had H.A. Stewart, the Minister of Works, stand up

²⁹ As for the hospital proposal, not only was this suggested project outside of “wholly federal” jurisdiction, but the Prime Minister stressed that “The Blow Building was rented for Hospital purposes years ago and the lease has still four years to run.” Telegram to Mayor Davison from R.B. Bennett, 28 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, reel M1459, 501090; CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 703.

³⁰ Telegram from Mayor Davison to Bennett, 28 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501094-95. Of interest, Bennett had his secretary send Davison acknowledgement of this letter to her signature, not his as had previously been the case. His disapproval was unmistakable. Letter A.E. Millar to Mayor Davison, 3 July 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501098.

in the House of Commons on 30 June 1934 and propose that the schedule containing the substantial allotment for the barracks be amended to read “Calgary or elsewhere in Alberta [emphasis mine]” as there “may be some question as to the exact location of the building.”³¹ In response, towns in the vicinity of Calgary were only too willing to offer their services.³²

The issue of the barracks was put before Parliament, and the leader of His Majesty’s Loyal Opposition was quick to use it against the Government. Although William Lyon Mackenzie King did not oppose Stewart’s motion, he challenged Bennett for the multitude of expensive projects being voted into Alberta and the Prime Minister’s constituency in particular:

Really, the only explanation I can give to myself that seems at all satisfactory is that the Prime Minister must be contemplating retiring from public life and is making a bequest out of the public treasury to the constituency that has honoured him with its representation in this house. Otherwise I cannot imagine why he has undertaken to vote \$1,500,000 to his own constituency and these paltry amounts to others. He is all powerful in these matters, and this is what the schedule reveals.³³

Quite expectedly, the Prime Minister begged to differ. It was facts that governed the decision, he argued, not politics. “For long years” the permanent force had been seeking permanent barracks. The force had proven indispensable to the nation, preserving law in the face of civil disorder, insurrection, or riot, and effectively becoming “a police force for Canada.” The barracks were required because the accommodations were dismal in Calgary and the permanent force was actually occupying the militia’s armoury, “greatly to

³¹ House of Commons, *Debates*, 30 June 1934, 4564, 4566.

³² On 30 June 1934 Bennett received several telegrams from interested parties. Frank Watt, the Mayor of High River, stated that his town could not understand Calgary’s reluctance and made the case for High River as an ideal site for the new barracks, with an indication that “sufficient land could be donated to government if could be induced to place barracks here.” J.W. Matthews from the High River Board of Trade echoed the Mayor that if the decision was made to build the barracks in High River, Bennett could rely on the “utmost support in every particular.” Mayor Walter R. Aris of Cochrane offered free land should the government decide to build there, and Deputy Mayor R.S. Boyd of Medicine Hat “would welcome barracks and would offer all concessions necessary for same.” NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501104-6, 501120, 501122. Edmonton was also interested. *The Edmonton Journal* could not understand the opposition of Calgary alderman and suggested that “it would be eminently proper in the circumstances for the capital city of Alberta to let Ottawa know that Edmonton would be glad to do everything within reason to bring a \$365,000 a year [illegible] here especially if it involves an initial and immediate expenditure of \$1,200,000. Quoted in *Calgary Albertan*, 3 July 1934, 4.

³³ House of Commons, *Debates*, 30 June 1934, 4565.

their detriment and to the detriment of the efficiency of militia headquarters.” Ten or eleven units were to be constructed, and the work could not be done for less than the sum allotted. If the barracks were not built, it would perpetuate an “injustice that has been done to the permanent force for the last ten years” and as a result the permanent force would move out of Calgary. Something was needed in the province of Alberta, and it would be moved elsewhere should certain Calgarians persist in their opposition. Bennett was confident to conclude that “the necessity for the work was the only factor that governed in any of these matters.”³⁴ Whatever the prime minister’s confidence and assessment of the situation, the barracks issue was not laid to rest and the controversies continued to mount.

Bennett’s 28 June telegram to Mayor Davison had an impact in Calgary. Davison called a brief but important emergency meeting of City Council on 29 June to specifically deal with the barracks question. Immediately after Bennett’s ominous telegram was tabled, a motion carried empowering the Mayor to “wire the Prime Minister that in view of the terms of his telegram of June 28th and the overwhelming need for employment for Calgary citizens, the Council of the City of Calgary accepts the proposed project and urges that it be carried forward at the earliest possible moment.” The Council’s decision was favourable, but only by a margin of 7-5.³⁵ This deep division set the stage for the weeks ahead, when all City Council votes on the barracks proposal were narrowly won by those supporting the project, often only due to the mayor’s tie-breaking vote.³⁶

The citizenry seemed to mirror this division, and the local churches were amongst the most bitterly engaged in the debate. On Tuesday 26 June, several United Church ministers were quoted as being opposed to “the most iniquitous thing they had heard of for a long time,” and on Friday evening a meeting of the General Ministerial Association was held to discuss the matter. In light of Bennett’s threat, the Ministerial Association rescinded previous resolutions of protest against the project; however, dissenting opinions were broadcast in local newspapers in editorials and letters to the editor. The Rev. Dr.

³⁴ House of Commons, *Debates*, 30 June 1934, 4565-66.

³⁵ “Minutes Of Emergency Meeting Of Council, Re: Barracks Site, Department Of National Defence,” 29 June 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 1934, 702.

³⁶ See, for example, Regular Council Meeting, 9 July 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 1934, 706-7.

Robert Paton of Scarboro United Church deplored the association's stand as being diametrically opposed to world peace:

Actuated by widely divergent motives, they have landed on a common platform in approving the expenditure for military purposes. I am not impugning the motives of members of the Ministerial Association. Some of them have declared themselves valiantly, from time to time, in the cause of peace and I know they will continue to do so. Others are more concerned about hanging battle emblems on the sanctuary of the Prince of Peace than they are about getting down to the realistic business of eradicating the ideas and conditions that make war possible.

As for the argument that this military barracks will bring Calgary an income of \$1,000 a day what shall we say of a standard of values which will offset our boys' lives against financial profit? We have harangued against the munition makers who make profit out of their own countrymen's distress. Is Calgary willing to profit by that kind of gain? Once, we sold our Lord for thirty pieces of silver. And what counterprice we have paid for it! Are we going to sell him again for \$1,200,000 with a keg of beer thrown in for good measure?³⁷

He had a "grave suspicion ... that it presaged the engagement of military activities locally." Alderman Harry Humble, who had continuously opposed to the deal, attacked the Ministerial Association's stance and condemned Bennett "in no mild manner" at a Social Credit League meeting on 3 July. In his view, the Prime Minister was inciting one city to go to war with others over "a measly million dollars." Rev. Dr. L. Fuerbringer, the President of Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis who was on a visit to Calgary, saw the actions of Calgary clergymen protesting construction of barracks as a prime example of how the church was brought into disrepute by meddling in affairs outside of its sphere. He strongly chastised the local clergy for their imprudent involvement, concluding that their "anti-war resolutions may justifiably be considered as bordering on treason." Others, like Rev. A.D. MacDonald of the Belfast and Delaware United Churches, seemed more comfortable sitting on the fence between the two views, but nevertheless felt a need to make their sentiments publicly known.³⁸

³⁷ Calgary Albertan, 26 June, 1; 3 July 1934, 2; Calgary Herald, 3 July 1934, 12. The United Church and associated local organizations were actively involved in the peace movement during the 1930s. See Strong-Boag, "Peace-making Women" and Thrift, "Proscribed Piety," 98-101.

³⁸ Calgary Albertan, 4 July 1934, 2, 8; 6 July 1934, 4.

Veronica Strong-Boag and others have shown that the “feminist-pacifist” movement was very active in the interwar years and Calgary was home to several groups espousing universal peace.³⁹ Women’s groups had formed the most strident opposition to the barracks project from the onset. However, this did not mean that all women joined in a united front of condemnation. The Calgary Business and Professional Women’s Club tabled a report from a committee appointed by the executive to deal with any action in regard to the construction of the proposed military barracks in the city. While expressing regret that the money was to be spent in such a manner, the committee members recommended that the matter be dropped insofar as their club was concerned. The decision of the committee was not unanimous; Dr. Margot Heimbürger opposed inaction on the grounds that the money was being used for militaristic purposes, and she was disheartened that local opposition had been withdrawn following Bennett’s “weak-kneed” threat to spend it elsewhere. Although the report was adopted, there were dissenting votes.⁴⁰ In other cases, women wrote to the Prime Minister directly to express their support, occasionally taking the time to castigate opponents of the scheme. For example, Ms E.S. Kerby informed Bennett that “all that row over the erection of the barracks was due to Mrs. Harvey Price and Mrs. Carson” and she went on to defame the two.⁴¹

Labour continued to protest the project, but their efforts were exerted in vain. Steps were taken to organize a mass meeting of the unemployed in protest, spearheaded by six groups affiliated with the United Worker’s Council of Delegates. Among these

³⁹ On the women’s peace movement in the 1930s see Veronica Strong-Boag, “Peace-Making Women: Canada 1919-1939,” in *Women and Peace: Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives*, Ed. Ruth Roach Pierson (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), 170-91; Thomas Socknat, “For Peace and Freedom: Canadian Feminists and the Interwar Peace Campaign,” in *Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace*, Ed. Janice Williamson and Deborah Graham (Toronto: The Woman’s Press, 1989), 66-90, as well as his full-length study *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Gayle Thrift, “Proscribed Piety: Woman’s Missionary Societies in Alberta, 1918-1939,” M.A. thesis (Department of History, University of Calgary, 1998).

⁴⁰ *Calgary Albertan*, 6 July 1934, 12.

⁴¹ Letter, E.S. Kerby, Mount Royal College, to Bennett, July 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501128. To quote a recent biographer, “Emily Spencer Kirby was a prominent club woman and member of Calgarian society who played a leading role in the development of women’s participation in government, education, and social reform.” Anne White, “Emily Spencer Kirby: Pioneer Clubwoman, Educator, and Activist,” *Alberta History* 46/3 (Summer 1998), 2-9. As a Methodist married to a minister (her husband was also principal of Mount Royal College), Kirby’s stance is interesting and demonstrates that the reception to the barracks proposal in Calgary was not uniform amongst feminists and members of the United Church.

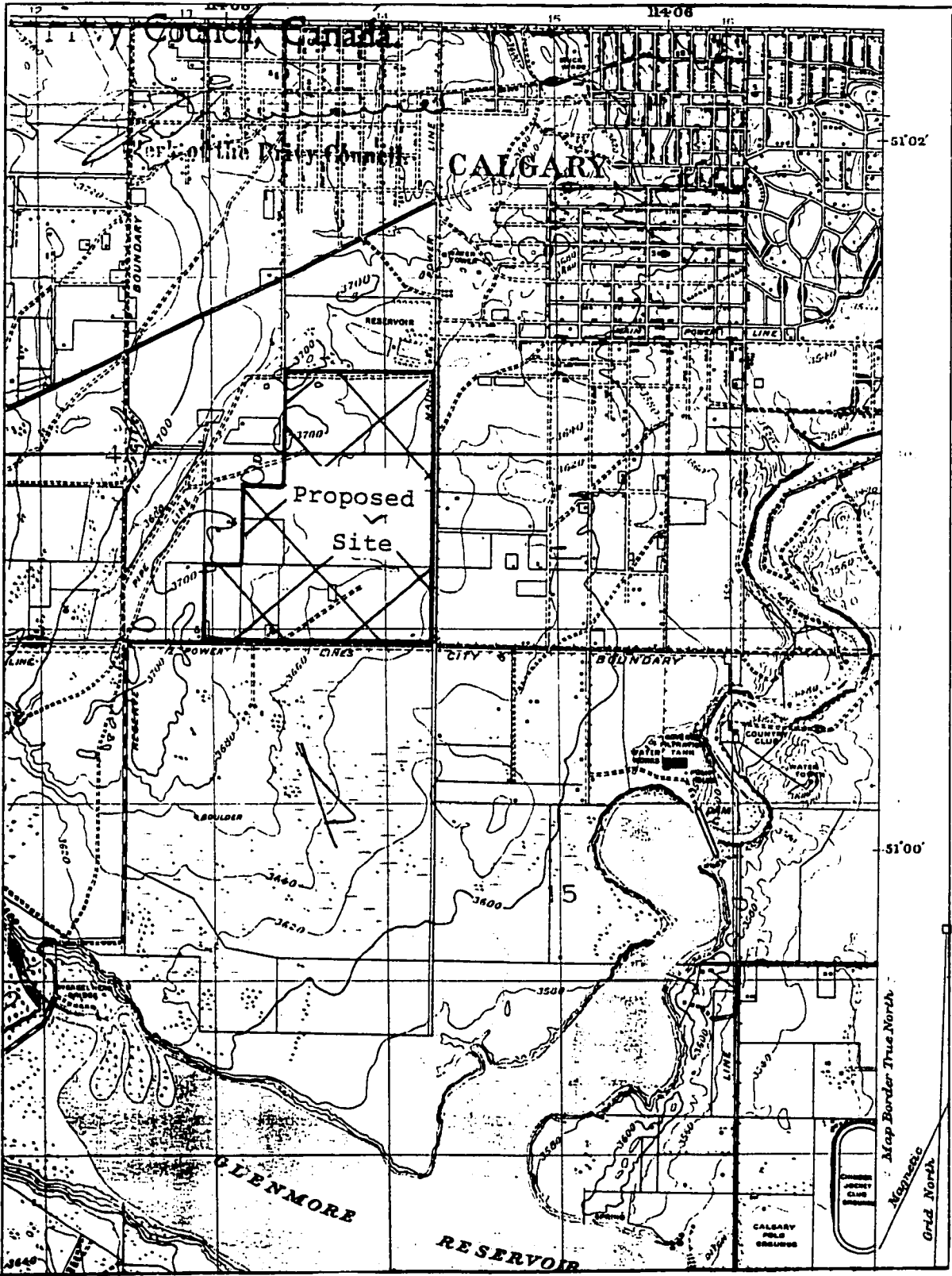
opposing groups was the Unemployed Ex-Service Men's Association, which continued to urge that the federal appropriation should be used for other purposes, like the construction of a hospital or aid to ex-service men.⁴² Despite its apparent local appeal, this proposal never garnered federal political support. Furthermore, not all ex-servicemen agreed that the military project should be opposed. Several letters of support were written by veterans who did not condemn the barracks proposal but asked that a preference for ex-servicemen be made in all public works contracts. Others urged the federal government to make an additional appropriation for a hospital. At a meeting of the "unemployed section" of the Canadian Legion, participants also expressed a desire that all work in connection with the barracks and airport construction should be done by day labour, and if contracts were issued that they should be confined to the province of Alberta.⁴³

Mayor Davison had been empowered to act on the matter, and headed to Ottawa in late July to strike a deal. He met with military officials at the office of the Chief of the General Staff on 31 July. The CGS, Major-General A.J.L. McNaughton, began by stating that there would be a general clause in all contracts for work which would provide for a measure of preference to unemployed ex-servicemen in need of relief. In a similar discussion over which Calgarians should be recipients of federal monies, Mayor Davison recommended that preference should be given to the "large number of unemployed married men residents of, and taxpayers in, Calgary ... as it is doubtful whether there will be sufficient work at the new barracks to provide for all the unemployed skilled artisans who are bona fide residents of the City." He suggested that work be carried on throughout the winter and that the Calgary office of the Employment Service of Canada work in conjunction with City officials to dispense work "to those most in need" and to ensure "that Calgary citizens will be given preference over those who drift in to the City looking for work." Both agreed that a rotation system could be adopted for day labour, that local architects would be employed, and that tenders for the construction work would be invited from local contractors only. A deal was reached for the transfer of the City-

⁴² Calgary Albertan, 7 July 1934, 8.

⁴³ Letter from R.W. Henderson and Alex Walker to Brigadier General Alex Reis, President of the Canadian Legion, 30 June 1934, c.c. to Bennett, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501103; Telegram, Dai Morgan, Imperial Veterans in Canada, to R.B., 30 June 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501110; Calgary Albertan, Wed. 4 July 1934, 5. See also correspondence in NAC, RG 11, Vol. 4308, File 2513-7.

Figure 10: Reservoir Park Area Planned for Calgary Barracks and Aerodrome⁴⁴



⁴⁴ Plan no. 1, 16 August 1934, NAC, RG 2, Vol. 1551, PC 1857.

owned Reservoir Park area (344 acres) to the military [see Figure 10], in exchange for \$10,000 in much-needed cash and 55 acres of the Old East Calgary rifle range located within the city limits. All privately owned land would be expropriated by the Dominion at no cost to the city. In addition, the Ottawa officials agreed to bear the entire cost of extending water and sewer facilities to their property, with the anticipation that the City would do the work on a cash basis. If City Council had been reluctant in the past, Davison's concluding remarks were comforting: "The City of Calgary is most anxious to co-operate in every way with the Dominion Government in this building programme."⁴⁵ This work was to commence immediately after the deal was formally and legally approved. City Council accepted it on 13 August 1934, and the Privy Council in Ottawa three days later.⁴⁶

In McNaughton, Bennett had a trusted ally at the DND on whom he relied to ensure his pet project was carried through. Throughout the summer of 1934, Bennett and the CGS had met regularly to discuss the Calgary barracks plan in great detail. McNaughton established a development committee within National Defence to deal with the Calgary barracks, laid out a communications diagram to ensure that information flowed through the proper channels, and was very careful to stay abreast of every development, no matter how minor. Every detail was communicated to Bennett, who in turn directed the CGS how to proceed with unusual interest.⁴⁷ Once a formal agreement

⁴⁵ Unemployment Relief, Meeting at Calgary, 31 July 1934, Memorandum, H.Q.C.6056, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 3048. The old rifle range (100.38 acres), originally acquired in 1903, had long been determined unsuitable for military training. As noted in the previous two case studies, the unfavourability of this site had formed part of the impetus to securing part of the Sarcee Reserve and it was the same parcel of land that the government had offered to exchange with the City at one point during the negotiations for the Mewata Park site, but had never been transferred. Under P.C. 1857, 16 August 1934, a portion of the former range was transferred to the City, and on 16 January 1936 the remainder transferred to the control of Department of the Interior for disposal. Telegram, QMG to DOC MD 13, 26 July 1934, NAC, RG 24, Vol. 6255, File: AHQ 18-36-4 Pt. 3; Duplicate Certificate of Title, South Alberta Land Registration District, 20 April 1903; Letter, DM, DPW to DM, DND, 3 April 1934; P.C. 1857; P.C. 110, NAC, RG 11, Series B-3, Vol. 4308, File 2513-7.

⁴⁶ Report of Mayor Davison re: Trip to Ottawa and Montreal, 10 August 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 1934, 781 (the reference in this Mayoral report carried 9-2 at Council meeting, 13 Aug 34, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8, 1934, 763); P.C. No. 1857, 16 August 1934, NAC, RG 2, Vol. 1551.

⁴⁷ Memorandum, CGS, 18 July 1934; Confidential Memorandum, CGS, 27 July 1934; Letter, CGS to R.K. Finlayson, Chief Private Secy to the Prime Minister, Ottawa, 1 August 1934; NAC, McNaughton, MG 30 E 133, CGS Files, Vol. 15A - Public Works Construction Acts, Armouries, Calgary, AB (McN(M) 82) (hereafter McN(M) 82).

was reached with the City, Bennett was anxious to begin construction as soon as possible. In late September 1934, McNaughton went to Calgary to personally oversee the barracks programme. The CGS held a series of meetings with the local architect, met with prominent local Tory and City officials, and sent forward recommendations of local contractors to ensure the process moved ahead. When McNaughton returned to Ottawa, he met with the Prime Minister to outline the progress that had been made. Bennett could not impress on him enough the "importance of proceeding expeditiously with the construction work."⁴⁸

In the autumn of 1934 the work began and huge earth-moving machines began to level the rolling prairie west of 24 Street in Calgary.⁴⁹ On 12 April 1935, an official groundbreaking ceremony was held and the cornerstone to Barrack Block #2 was laid by His Excellency the Governor General, the Earl of Bessborough. The CGS, prominent local military officials and the various contractors and sub-contractors involved in construction were amongst those present.⁵⁰ The barracks construction program was underway, but controversy over the scheme had by no means abated. Local interest groups and politicians continued to raise doubts about the implementation of the decision, putting grassroots pressure on the Prime Minister from below. Furthermore, reaction to the barrack building scheme was not isolated to the city of Calgary or even the province of Alberta. In Ottawa, a controversy was mounting over the construction project that plagued the Conservatives into 1939, even after Bennett's party was defeated by King's Liberals in October 1935.⁵¹ As could be expected the House of Commons debate over

⁴⁸ Telegram, CGS (in Calgary) to General Staff, Ottawa, 25 September 1934; Memo, CGS, 25 September 34; Telegram, CGS (in Calgary) to General Staff, Ottawa, 5 October 1934; Memorandums, CGS, 5 October 1934; "Subject to Correction," CGS, Calgary, to General Staff, 5 October 1934; Memorandum, CGS, 26 October 1934, NAC, McN(M) 82.

⁴⁹ Richard Cuniffe, "Notes on the History of Sarcee Camp and Currie Bks," Glenbow Archives, Richard Cuniffe Fonds (#M3610), 2.

⁵⁰ "Photographs Showing Progress On The Calgary Barracks From November 1934," unaccessioned photo album, Museum of the Regiments; miscellaneous papers re: laying of foundation stone in NAC, McN(M) 82; Letter, John G. Bennett, Bennett & White Construction Co., to Lieut.-Col. J.C. Stewart, DND, Calgary, 5 April 1935, DHH 109.009 (D226).

⁵¹ On 14 October 1935, the Liberals garnered 2,076,394 votes (171 seats) to the Conservatives 1,308,688 (39 seats), a decisive victory ushering in a Liberal Administration that would hold power until 1957. Of note, the new Social Credit Party won 15 seats in Alberta. Figures from Watkins, *R.B. Bennett*, 227.

the Calgary barracks emerged along partisan lines, but it encompassed several interconnected themes.

The most basic accusation launched at Bennett was that his motive for the barracks project was a self-serving desire to placate his constituents. Liberal critics called it a “monument to the memory of the very distinguished member for that constituency,” and the Liberal MP for Edmonton West continued to harass the Conservatives over the need for the barracks, suggesting that the building scheme had nothing to do with the military.⁵² The member for Hamilton West could not understand why his city, more than double the size of Calgary, could not get an appropriation of ten or fifteen thousand dollars for a rifle range when Calgary was the recipient of such a massive project.⁵³

While the process of choosing Calgary as the site for the construction of barracks drew cries of political bias, the means by which the construction project took effect were also greeted by accusations of patronage vis-à-vis the contract letting process. That this was the case was not surprising, given the Prime Minister’s interest in even the minutest details of the Calgary military development scheme. In a memorandum, General McNaughton illustrated the depth of consultation sought by the prime minister and the latter’s devotion to the project:

[Bennett] was most anxious to see that this should be a creditable work; that he looked to the Defence Department to see that this work was placed in hand expeditiously and that it was carried out in the best style and taste.... The Prime Minister laid emphasis on the fact that the building should be fire-proof or as nearly fire-proof as possible ... He asked about partitions ... The Prime Minister said that particular care should be taken with the basements and that he would like to see them and the outside walls well up by the winter months. He said that he favoured central heating and mentioned that gas was available for heating but he intimated that there might be pressure brought to bear to use coal.... The Prime Minister then mentioned that the Bennett-White Construction Company and the Carter-Halls Company were two reliable contractors who could be trusted to execute any plans properly and he intimated that he thought that contracts for separate buildings should be let locally as soon as the plans were ready. He impressed upon me that he was most anxious that we

⁵² House of Commons, Debates, 28 February 1935, 1319; 8 March 1935, 1554-6.

⁵³ House of Commons, Debates, 8 May 1936, 2621.

should proceed to the full extent of the \$1,200,000 presently available and that this could, if necessary, be increased to \$1,300,000 if really required.⁵⁴

Bennett had a final say over which firm's names appeared on lists for tenders, and he was kept abreast of all new developments, no matter how trivial they may have appeared, by officials in Ottawa and his local political organization in Calgary.⁵⁵ The opposition was concerned with Bennett's involvement, and Liberal Edmonton MP Charles Stewart warned the Prime Minister that he would be keeping a close eye on how the Forster Construction company, a Liberal supporter, was treated.⁵⁶ Bennett, in self-defence, argued before the House of Commons that names of prospective firms were randomly drawn from a hat.⁵⁷ This is an unlikely story in light of his private correspondence.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the Prime Minister always insisted that the lowest bids would be accepted, and as appendix G indicates the companies that submitted the lowest tenders for barrack building block number two and the mess building were indeed awarded the contracts. This was consistent with later projects.⁵⁹

Bennett was also directly involved in the hiring process for positions related to construction. Many appeals were made to the Prime Minister for work, and a few individuals, like A.P. Patrick, an 86-year old Calgary land surveyor with "a large family

⁵⁴ Memorandum, Meeting between CGS and Bennett, Ottawa, 18 July 1934, NAC, (McN(M) 82); largely quoted from Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada*, 317. Such a dramatic depiction of prime ministerial interest in even the most mundane matters would suggest that Bennett was, as James Eayrs suggested, 'obsessed' with the project. Certainly the prime minister had no similar depth of interest in any other ongoing departmental matter of the day.

⁵⁵ The following letter from the Minister of National Defence to Bennett's private secretary yields insight into this dynamic: "My Dear Alice, Further to our telephone conversation of this morning's date, I have sent along the 13 names which you gave me and tenders will be invited from these, for the first barrack block, and when it is time to invite tenders for the next and subsequent buildings we will ask you what names you wish placed on the list. Personal letter, Hon. Stirling to A.E. Millar, 18 September 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501176.

⁵⁶ House of Commons, *Debates*, 8 March 1935, 1554.

⁵⁷ House of Commons, *Debates*, 10 June 1938, 3745.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Telegram, "Scott" [Lieut.-Col. Clyde R. Scott, Military Secy] to Miss Alice Millar, Calgary, undated (late 1934?), NAC, McN(M) 81. Bennett was similarly involved in the tendering for construction of sewers and watermains. See Letter, A.E. Millar to Colonel Scott, DND, 9 October 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501187.

⁵⁹ P.C. 2811, 8 November 1934, NAC, McN(M) 82. See, for example, P.C. 3241, 23 October 1935, NAC, RG 11, Vol. 4308, File 2513-7; P.C. 1119, 12 May 1936, NAC, RG 11, Vol. 4308, File 2513-9A.

who are all good Tory votes in R.B.'s seat," seemed to find qualified success.⁶⁰ Bennett was personally involved in the selection of W.S. Bates and Harold S. Beckett as Architect and Landscape Architect for the project respectively.⁶¹ Clandestine patronage likely took place behind the scenes, but the extent could not have been widely known at the time and remains difficult to ascertain based on the fragmented evidence left behind.

Through well directed lobbying and negotiations, the City and community interests obtained numerous concessions from Bennett and the federal government that contributed to local control and exclusive Calgary access to the project. Federal government policies requiring that tenderers deposit securities with their bids were amended specifically so that local businesses could compete for construction projects. Not only did this open up bidding to more than "two or three large firms," but served "to distribute work with a view to keeping our construction industry, which includes many small firms, alive."⁶² Bennett (under direction from local advisers) rejected appeals by contractors outside of Calgary requesting the right to tender on various buildings – even when they were "good friends" and "old friends" of the Conservative Party. The prime minister and his Tory friends in Calgary preferred to decide "who to allow to bid" so as to "distribute this work amongst Calgary Contractors as widely as possible."⁶³ Pressures from local unions, veterans organizations and the City also led Bennett (through the federal government) to limit hiring of labourers from the city exclusively.

This "Calgary only" clause proved somewhat problematic and incited accusations of discrimination. Yielding to pressure from local unions, the Mayor of Calgary sent a

⁶⁰ Letter, G.S. Robinson to Miss Millar, 22 August 1934; Letter, Millar to Stewart, Minister of Public Works, 1 September 1934; Letter from Lt.-Col. Clyde R. Scott, Military Secretary, to Mrs. Powers, September 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501159-60, 501172.

⁶¹ Letter, Harold Beckett to R.B. [he obviously knew the PM personally], 1 August 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M978, 80564; Telegram, R.B. Bennett to Harold S. Beckett, 18 July 1934; Telegram, CGS to DOC MD 13, 18 July 1934; Letters, L.R. Lafleche, DM, DND, to Finlayson and W.S. Bates, Calgary, 2 August 1934; Confidential Memorandum, CGS to DM, MS, QMG, 4 August 1934; P.C. 2000, 30 August 1934; P.C. 2755, 3 November 1934, NAC, McN(M) 82.

⁶² Memorandum, CGS to DM, 18 October 1934, McN(M) 82; Letter, unnamed Calgary constituent to A.E. Millar, 6 October 1934; Letter, Sutherland to R.B., 27 October 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501179, 501204.

⁶³ Two examples, one appeal by a Vancouver firm and another by a Winnipeg company, are found in NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501188, 501202, 501207-9, 501263-4. This Calgary-only contracting policy acted upon a suggestion that had been discussed earlier by Bennett and Calgary MP Stanley. Letter, G.D. Stanley to R.B., 8 August 1934, marked "Personal in full;" Letter, R.B. to Stanley, 13 August 1934, "Personal in full," NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501154-5.

letter to the Prime Minister in October of 1934 protesting the employment of teamsters from outside of the city.⁶⁴ The Prime Minister had a local Tory adviser look into the matter, who reported back as follows:

The matter is nearly too trivial to bother with. The barrack site is on the extreme southwestern limits of the Town. They wanted 14 teams to level off the ground for the first buildings. 5 teams were procured in the City, and 2 teams from [illegible], who lives east of the city. These were put in by Stanley [the Conservative MP for Calgary East]. The other 7 teams were from people adjacent to the work, who are all in the Prime Minister's constituency, good workers, and badly in need of a little extra money to carry them through the Winter; such as Moulds, [illegible], and people like this.

I personally made several trips to the outskirts to secure these teams; feeling that with these people being so hard up, they might resent us sending teams past their noses, *and we wanted their votes* [italics mine]. To me it seems like Calgary would complain of Winnipeg or Toronto Contractors got the contract for the Barracks. Why shouldn't the people complain about sending teams out to their district when they have teams idle. Incidentally the City forced them to take out a teamster's card, which cost them \$6.00 for the prospect of 2 or 3 weeks work.⁶⁵

This controversy illustrates tensions between the rural and urban, and the inclusion of personal names gave a face to the recipients of the federal disbursements. Without a doubt the local Conservatives were directly involved in selecting some of the work parties used in construction. The irony of the city charging those residing just outside of city limits for teamster cards, and then speaking out against their employment to the Prime Minister, was duly noted. Bennett retorted to Acting Mayor in late November: "I cannot but think that, in reconsideration you will realise you had no cause for protest as this work did not require skilled labourers and surely those residing near the site would not be debarred from employment merely because they live on the other side of the boundary line of the city."⁶⁶ Discord between the municipal and federal governments continued.

A.A. Heaps, the CCF member for North Winnipeg, brought another major patronage issue to the floor of the Commons in May 1935. He shared a letter from the

⁶⁴ Minutes of City Council Meeting, 15 October 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1934), 971.

⁶⁵ Letter, Robinson to Millar, 26 October 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, reel M1459, 501210.

⁶⁶ Letter, Bennett to F.J. White, 20 November 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, reel M1459, 501245.

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBCJA), Local Union No. 1779, in Calgary, which accused the government of favouritism and outright discrimination:

The members of the above local wish to inform you that when the building of the barracks at Calgary was announced it was generally accepted that the available work would be spread out to afford a maximum of assistance to the various classes of craftsmen which it might employ.

Contractors opened lists for the carpenters who had worked for them at various periods, and many workmen hoped that after waiting many months for the work to begin, at least they would be able to get a few days' unemployment. Now we are to understand that the only hope of ever getting work on the barracks job is when his name is on the approved list which is furnished to the contractors.

The members of local 1779 request that when parliament is opened a protest be vigorously made against the practice of using this patronage list as it is debarring carpenters who are loyal and have been citizens of this country for the last twenty-five to thirty years, also a large percentage of the members being ex-service men. Owing to this approval list being used certain carpenters are being given employment by the various contractors on the scheme, thereby making it impossible for others to get employment.⁶⁷

There is no evidence that the federal government was supplying the contractors with lists of designated workers. In response to these allegations, Bennett's Minister of Public Works (H.A. Stewart) contended that the contractors obtained their lists from various sources (unemployment agencies, churches, returned soldier organizations, Daughters of the Empire, and other bodies), and that the government had left it to them to decide. Turning the conversation over to past instances of Liberal patronage, the Conservative member maintained that the government had "no policy of discrimination and that it does not dictate or control in the matter of those who shall be employed on these works. It is not done through political channels, and it does not meet with the approval of the government if it is."⁶⁸ Whether or not this was truly the case, the Conservatives in Ottawa sustained this party line throughout the 1930s. The Calgary barracks project

⁶⁷ House of Commons, Debates, 20 May 1935, 2890; 10 June 1938, 3746.

⁶⁸ House of Commons, Debates, 20 May 1935, 2888-89.

would be a point of comparison against which many subsequent building projects under the Liberal administration were measured.

Although construction of the barracks was a federal project, the City had agreed to provide sewer and water mains for the new developments. They too felt the pressures of controversy. The costs for the infrastructure extensions were borne by the Federal Government, but the municipal council was responsible for administering this particular aspect of the project.⁶⁹ In partial response to a letter addressed to the City Clerk from the local union of the UBCJA requesting that "City Council declare that all contemplated work done by the City of Calgary, shall be rotated, allowing only one key man for each ten workmen actually employed at any one time," it was decided in mid-August that labour associated with the barracks erection was to be "given to unemployed taxpayers" and that rotation of labor utilized "to the best possible advantage."⁷⁰ Several problems arose as a result. Some taxpayers believed that they could work and still collect relief, only applying their associated earnings to the payment of their taxes.⁷¹ Furthermore, the next year the same labour organization that had requested the rotation of workers suggested that the work distribution had been discriminatory, and that some men had "been employed for three and four stretches while others have had only one and even in some instances not even the first chance."⁷² Although the City Comptroller's report on the labour allegations proved them to be largely unfounded, controversies such as this were a thorn in the side of City Council and continued to make the barracks construction project a tenuous undertaking.⁷³

⁶⁹ Mayoral Report (by Acting Mayor Andrew Davison) to Council, 20 August 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1934), 834.

⁷⁰ This adopted by a 6-5 Council vote, Minutes from City Council Meeting, 13 August 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1934), 763; Letter, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Local Union No. 1779, Calgary, to City Clerk, 3 August 1934, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1934), 774.

⁷¹ Commissioner's Report, 30 August 1934, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1934), 866.

⁷² Letter from United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Local Union No. 1779, Calgary, to City Commr., Mayor and Council members, 26 April 1935, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1935), 390. This suggestion was motioned and carried (7-5), instructing that the "City Comptroller by appointed by this Council to examine the paysheets of the work carried out at the Barracks site for the purpose of ascertaining how many individuals have received two or more rotations of employment on this particular work." Minutes of Council Meeting, 29 April 1935, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1935), 380.

⁷³ The City Comptroller's examination of pay sheets classified the registration of unemployed taxpayers for this work, starting in August 1934, as: (a) 219 Relief recipients; (b) 93 Recent applications; (c) 236 Not yet

Returning to the federal level, a vocal stream of opposition in the House of Commons in Ottawa argued that the entire scheme was a dramatic misplacement of funds. Similar to the grassroots opposition that greeted the proposal in the City of Calgary, suggestions were raised that the money might have been better allocated for social programs or community infrastructure that would have benefited various parts of the dominion.⁷⁴ Charles 'Chubby' Power linked the Calgary project to wasted military brainpower and broader criticisms of unemployment relief projects. According to his estimation, the allocation of military resources under Bennett was a "crying shame and a disgrace to our country and our civilization."⁷⁵ Few were more articulate and compelling than Agnes MacPhail, the independent (United Farmers of Ontario) member for Grey South East. In MacPhail's opinion, the government had displayed a chronic lack of imagination in its make-work expenditures. Her plea is worth quoting at length:

I wish to protest as strongly as I can against the expenditure of vast sums of money on military buildings, arsenals, armouries or whatever they might be. In thinking over the things that Canada needs I would put additional armouries or military buildings at the bottom of the list rather than at the top. I can think of a dozen other things that could be done.... For instance, we could eliminate all level crossings in Canada. Of course that would be preventing people from being killed instead of getting ready for the killing of some more. We could carry out a large program of reforestation, something which is very much needed; and we could eliminate slums and build improved roads where they do not exist. We could have sanitary equipment installed in homes already built, and could have extension of electrical energy to all houses in Canada. We could do all that.... Surely we do not have to go on with this stupid business of erecting more military buildings, especially in times like these, in order to provide work.⁷⁶

Others shared similar, 'peaceful' aspirations in the wake of such 'aggressive, militaristic'

sent out; (d) 963 Notified for work. For the purposes of the report he recognized a shift as 140 hours (about 3 weeks employment), and found 963 in group (d), 652 with 140 hours or less; 100 had no hours; 211 people with 2 shifts or more. Of men with no hours, 64 were notified by Labour Bureau but failed to report for duty, and 36 were given work on the Street Railway Department. He then broke down the group of those with two shifts or more, of whom only 11 had more than 300 hours. The conclusion was that the union's concerns were unwarranted. Report, E.A. Hookway, City Comptroller, to J.M. Miller, City Clerk, 23 May 1935, CCA, City Clerks Council Minutes, reel #8 (1935), 514-15.

⁷⁴ See, for example, House of Commons, *Debates*, 7 April 1936, 1878.

⁷⁵ House of Commons, *Debates*, 8 March 1935, 1558.

⁷⁶ House of Commons, *Debates*, 8 March 1935, 1555-56.

endeavours. On 8 March 1935, J.S. Woodsworth, the pacifist leader of the CCF, joined into the fray. In his address, far too much money was being spent on the Canadian military and their “elaborate public buildings.” Calgary was a perfect case study of excessive emphasis on the military, leading Woodsworth to question the government’s basic direction: “Where are we getting in this country? Some of us had imagined that Canada was a peaceful country but this does not look very much like it. We cannot find the money for peace purposes.”⁷⁷ In a scathing morsel of well-executed sarcasm, Liberal Jean-François Pouliot remarked that: “Perhaps on account of the excellent work which is being done by this country at the League of Nations, the seat of the league will some day be transferred from Geneva to Calgary, and those barracks will become the palace of peace on this continent.”⁷⁸ Even Mackenzie King cast the Conservatives as war mongers with ‘dictatorial’ aspirations to great effect during his 1935 election campaign: “There are drill halls and armouries being built at a heavy cost.... Why? It is to build up a great military force because all dictatorships demand force and the last word in dictatorships is the cannon and what comes out of the cannon.”⁷⁹

It is, of course, the nature of our confrontational parliamentary system to encourage such accusations of patronage and conflict along partisan lines. The construction of the barracks in Calgary was the most vociferously criticized of the 144 unemployment relief projects and additional Public Works Construction Act projects authorized by the government.⁸⁰ The extent to which federal political opposition to the development of the barracks damaged the credibility of R.B. Bennett is unknown. Nevertheless, it did prove a nuisance, plaguing him for the rest of the decade and forcing both he and his party to justify their actions closely. His constituents, the recipients of this generous project, re-elected him in 1935 when most of the country abandoned his party. That same year they witnessed the unveiling of the local military’s pride and joy.

⁷⁷ House of Commons, *Debates*, 8 March 1935, 1562.

⁷⁸ House of Commons, *Debates*, 28 February 1935, 1319.

⁷⁹ King in the *Ottawa Citizen* early in the 1935 election campaign (likely September), as quoted by Hon. Grote Stirling (MP, Yale) in the House of Commons, *Debates*, 25 June 1938, 2205. The opposition Conservatives were, at this point, challenging the Liberals for speaking out of both sides of their mouths by disparaging the Conservatives while they were in power for defence expenditures, then augmenting allotments for defence considerably after the Liberals took power in 1935.

The development of the Calgary barracks site was completed in various phases between 1935 and 1938. Christened "Currie Barracks" in honour of Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Currie, the famous commander of the Canadian Corps during World War One,⁸¹ the end product comprised a vast array of new buildings ready for occupancy. The guard room and Royal Canadian Signals' communication centre flanked the main gate on 24th Street. The Athlone building, its white paint glistening in the sun, was an improvement over the downtown federal building which previously housed the administration offices. On the northwest side of the parade square was a dormitory block with Quartermaster stores. Just east of this building was another block containing the soldiers' canteen, library, dining room, and kitchen on the main floor, with the sergeants' and corporals' messes above them. To the southwest was a supply depot, forage store, garage, horse stables, a farrier shop, and a veterinary hospital. At the west end of the barracks property, the finishing touches were put on the officers' mess and the Commanding Officer's residence, and the RCAF Hangar awaited the "flying cavalry." The complex truly took shape as the "only self-contained and complete military unit" in Canada, every square foot the showpiece Bennett had originally envisioned.⁸²

In May 1935, the regimental headquarters and "B" Squadron of Lord Strathcona's Horse departed the Mewata Armoury and claimed possession of their new home.⁸³ Currie Barracks must have been the envy of the Canadian forces stationed elsewhere across the country. The troops stationed at Currie comprised a rare group whose lot had actually improved in the midst of Depression. Bennett had weathered the storms of

⁸⁰ This observation is made on the basis of a cursory examination of House of Commons debates during the 1930s.

⁸¹ On the naming of the barracks, see correspondence in DHH 327.009 (D22).

⁸² Under the 1935 PWCA, an additional \$492,000 was committed for additional work on the Barrack site. Memorandum, D.E.S. to Q.M.G., 25 May 1935 re PWCA 1934, Additional Funds Required, McNaughton, MG 30 E 133, CGS Files, Vol. 15A - Public Works Construction Acts, Public Work Construction Act 1934 (McN(M) 81). Cunneiffe, "Notes on the History of Sarcee Camp and Currie Bks," 2; City of Calgary, Heritage Advisory Board Evaluation and Review Sub-Committee Recommendations, CFB Calgary, Currie Barracks, 11 July 1997, building research reports attached; Letter, R.B. to Lt.Col. George S. Robinson, DND, 4 August 1934, NAC, Bennett Papers, M1459, 501151-2. Several more land plane hangars were built over the next decade.

⁸³ As early as July 1934, the Development Committee set up to oversee the barracks developed an order of priority in the arrival of units: 1. LSH (RC) Regimental HQ and 1 Squadron; 2. RCAF Detachment (to use the aerodrome under construction); 3. Battery of Artillery; 4. RCAF Depot; and 5. Company of Infantry. Memorandum, CGS, 12 July 1934, NAC, McN(M) 82.

controversy in Ottawa and, although much work was still to be done to finish the development of the property, sunny days appeared to be on the horizon. "Compared to the cramped quarters in Mewata Armoury and the lean-to stables at the end of 14th Street," Richard Cuniffe conveyed, "the new barracks seemed like some kind of heaven to the troopers who were earning [but] one dollar and twenty cents per day." The Warrant Officers and senior Non-Commissioned Officers could now be joined by their families in a four-residence married quarter block just off of 24th street. In the coming years roadways were constructed and a landscaping programme implemented.⁸⁴ The green grass and trees brought a semblance of tranquility and normalcy hitherto unknown to professional soldiers in the city.

Bennett was proud of the barracks, and answered his critics with dignity and conviction. The now-Opposition leader's lengthy speech to the House of Commons on 7 April 1936 was a fitting tribute to the accomplishment of building a permanent barracks at Calgary, "the only place where barracks of a permanent nature were erected for the permanent forces of Canada":

The position was simply this, that for long years an effort had been made to erect some sort of suitable buildings in which men could live. We had a permanent force; part of it was stationed at Calgary. They had no suitable quarters. They had some land but they had no buildings. The conditions were unsanitary and unhealthful, and in every way the situation was unsatisfactory. When the pressure for the erection of these buildings reached the point it did, the question was as to where they should be erected. There were some barracks erected at Winnipeg, and they* made up their minds that it was desirable to construct some buildings of this kind in Alberta....

He continued, stressing the benefits accrued by his constituency and the country as a whole:

[The barracks] were erected there by means of substantial expenditures, and that work gave employment to a very large number of men. The material utilized also gave employment to large numbers of men in factories and mills, and the extent to which employment was provided by the expenditure of that money was very great indeed -- for instance, the steel, the fabricating of it, the concrete, which came from the Exshaw

⁸⁴ Cuniffe, "Notes on the History of...", 2.

* 'They' is unspecified.

cement plant, and then the work of levelling and cleaning up the premises. I went over the whole work myself when I was there in the early part of the year to see what had been involved in the way of work, and I was amazed at the number of men who had been employed. That was an undertaking that had to be carried out, otherwise it would have meant the abandonment of the permanent force establishment as far as that community was concerned. And the men giving their time and being paid a trifling wage are the permanent police force of this country, men who may be called upon to risk their lives under certain conditions, as they have done in past years; they are entitled to a place to live in, and when the opportunity offered it was provided. To compare that with a community hall is not worthy of the hon. Gentleman. To compare that with the erection of eight or ten community halls is entirely beside the question. This nation assumed the responsibility of maintaining law and order. To do so it maintains a permanent force, whose duties are fixed by law.... it was as judicious and as wise an expenditure as could be made. In addition it provides for the very matter that is in the estimates this year, namely an airport and additional accommodation and facilities for landing and taking off. It is all part of that self-contained unit. It is not completed, but if there was ever an expenditure warranted in the interest of the nation as a whole it is that expenditure, unless we are to shirk our entire responsibility and say we are protected by some other country in some other circumstances, as seems to be the method that is so much in vogue in this country. I notice that the United States spent large sums on works of this very kind, because they enable men who are charged with certain responsibilities to lead decent lives while carrying out the duties with which they are charged.⁸⁵

For all intents and purposes, the development of Currie Barracks was Bennett's initiative. James Eayrs argued in his masterful study of Canadian defence policy during the interwar years that Bennett's tenure as Prime Minister was marked by a devastating lack of commitment to military concerns. Given the socio-economic climate of the Depression, and the concomitant slashing of defence budgets, one might be hard-pressed to suggest that the construction project was more than a political scheme to channel funds into the Prime Minister's constituency. Nevertheless, the permanent force in Calgary had been in genuine need of a new facility for years, and defence construction (purely federal jurisdiction) provided a means for Bennett to placate his loyal constituents. The barracks scheme provided an opportunity to appropriate a sizeable amount of federal money for his

⁸⁵ House of Commons, *Debates*, 7 April 1936, 1878-79.

riding in one lump sum, ensuring that the project would be completed (and the flow of money sustained) even if his governing mandate expired, as it did in 1935. Currie Barracks was also a way of ensuring the continued presence of the military and accompanying economic benefits in the years ahead. Even in the face of severe criticism, he saw the barracks as a resounding success for both the community and the military therein. In the early 1940s, when Canada found itself in the grips of ‘total war’ for the second time in a generation and thousands of soldiers flooded into Calgary to train for overseas service, Bennett’s decision must have looked ingenious. Few that had denounced militarism in the midst of the Depression did so during the dark days of World War II.

Historians, like H. Blair Neatby, have tended to depict Bennett as an “arrogant bully” and a notoriously poor politician who rarely consulted with his cabinet ministers before making major policy decisions.⁸⁶ His involvement in the early controversy over whether to build the barracks in Calgary may substantiate such claims. Bennett was unyielding in his plans to build the barracks, acting rather arrogantly and heavy-handed in his manner of quashing suggestions that money could be dispensed for other purposes. He was defensive to accusations of impropriety. Bennett could also be viewed as self-aggrandizing, even narcissistic, in his descriptions of what he had done seemingly single-handedly to secure the district military headquarters for Calgary in the first place. His depth of involvement and interest in the project was indeed “immense” and perhaps even “obsessive” (to reiterate Eayrs’ assessment). Certainly he and his local advisers influenced contracting decisions, although there is no indication that any of the apparent patronage was illegal.

The controversy could also be used to paint a rather different, and more favourable, portrait of Bennett and his relations with Calgarians. There was a requirement for barracks in Calgary and, regardless of what defence expenditures in the early thirties might suggest, Bennett had proven to be a staunch supporter of a Canadian military presence before he became Prime Minister. Historian G.F.G. Stanley correctly

⁸⁶ Neatby also contended that Bennett had few defenders, even when he was in power during the Depression (“even his colleagues felt no affection for him”). *The Politics of Chaos: Canada in the Thirties* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), 51-52.

evaluated that an investment of money in *matériel* would have been political suicide at a time when so many people were “clamouring for help to earn a decent living.” By developing the barracks at Calgary, Bennett provided material assistance to the defence forces while at the same time offering unemployed Calgarians a measure of relief.⁸⁷ The Prime Minister appeared to be surprised when the proposal was greeted with local opposition, given what he felt the community stood to gain in terms of short and long-term financial benefits. He was unwilling to entertain ideas that something more “peaceful” should have been constructed; changing the terms of the project would have been dangerous in Ottawa and may have jeopardized the injection of money into cash-starved Calgary. Whether the amendment to the appropriation bill (providing that the barracks could be built somewhere else in Alberta) was a heavy-handed political ploy or not, it represented a calculated risk by the Prime Minister that could have seen the project move to somewhere other than his home constituency (a suggestion that could be used to counter criticisms that the project was a self-serving act to appease loyal voters). In this light, his coercive methods of convincing Calgary’s city council to adopt the federal government’s proposal in the face of conflicting local pressures may have been warranted. Furthermore, although Bennett was involved in the decision-making process, approving final lists of firms tendering construction contracts, he did not appear to commit any serious improprieties. The contracts were let to the lowest bidders, citizens of Calgary and their immediate rural neighbours were employed in the project and, despite the hindrance of having to deal with opposition critics in Ottawa, the project was completed. The city of Calgary received compensation for the land transfer and contrived a system of taxpayer work in lieu of taxes, and constituents were given employment that the free market would not have provided. If Bennett continues to remain an enigma to historians,⁸⁸ the controversy over the construction of Currie Barracks does not lend itself

⁸⁷ George F.G. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers, 1604-1954* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1954), 343-44.

⁸⁸ As Michael Bliss argued, “Bennett’s unattractive personality clouds attempts at judgement, and helps explain why ... he still awaits a thorough biography.” *Right Honourable Men*, 113. There is no study of the system of patronage under the Bennett administration, although a study along the lines of John English’s *The Decline of Politics: The Conservatives and the Party System, 1901-1920* (University of Toronto Press, 1977) would be helpful to test the validity of accusations made by Bennett’s opponents and to consider to what extent the dispensation of jobs to political supporters was commonplace at the time.

to either an outright favourable or unfavourable characterization of a politician who had to cope with conflicting interests in his home riding.

The completion of Currie Barracks ensured that Calgary would continue to be the major Western Canadian military training centre. The permanent force was a permanent fixture in Calgary, and now had the finest accommodations in the country. The aerodrome built alongside the barracks (later renamed Lincoln Park) proved a “vital” British Commonwealth Air Training Plan facility in the years ahead.⁸⁹ In light of the concerns expressed a few years previous, Calgary was beginning to look more and more like a “garrison town” than it ever had before. And changing circumstances made it more so as the 1930s became the 1940s and Canada found itself engaged in another world war. Camp Sarcee, Mewata Camp and A16 Canadian Infantry Training Centre (the wartime name of Currie Barracks) provided the facilities for training thousands of the devoted Canadians who served their nation overseas.

Figure 11: A View of Barrack Block No.2 Looking North, 17 October 1937⁹⁰



⁸⁹ “Calgary Vital Centre in Air Training Plan,” n.d., Calgary Public Library, Clipping File, “CFB.” On issues surrounding the construction of the aerodrome, see NAC, RG 11, Vol. 4308, File 2513-11A. During the war the aerodrome accommodated #3 Service Flying Training School (SFTS) and the No. 10 Supply Depot.

⁹⁰ Unaccessioned photo album, Museum of the Regiments.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Calgary was not always the beloved “Garrison Town” cherished in recent journalist accounts and public reminiscences. These case studies have illustrated that idealized conceptions of the origins of the city’s military presence are concealing a past marked by clamorous opposition, political wrangling, and aggravating delays. If anything, the physical facilities that ensured a continued military focus in Calgary were built in spite of public opposition, not because of universal civic support. It is important that this story of controversial origins be remembered, as the community is being forced to deal with its military past in order to understand the present and determine priorities for the future.

The development of real properties for military uses, a subject that has received little academic study in this country, reflects both national and local influences. The key impact is that of the Canadian political system upon the military. Another is the interplay between different local interests in communities hosting military personnel and headquarters. Therefore, in the context of property development, civil-military relations are also community-military and community-political relations. This thesis showed a wide breadth of considerations and influences involved in military property development by concentrating on particular perspectives in each of the three case studies (internal negotiations between federal government bodies, the local government’s perspective, and federal political direction respectively). An examination of both the local and national aspects of debates over “military” property development facilitated a multifaceted understanding of these complicated development processes.

This historical examination revealed that contemporary political and community debates about the closure of CFB Calgary reflect a legacy of controversy dating back to the turn of the century. The plans and proposals for military development represented the prevalent military ethos and priorities of the day, while the form and pace of development was shaped by political and social interests as well as national and local socio-economic

contexts. The development process was a product of Ottawa-level decision-making influenced and enacted by local stakeholders.

Central to any discussion of competing interests, decision-making and development is the concept of power. The three case studies illustrated a variety of ways in which power was derived and exercised by individuals and groups. Urban historian Gilbert Stelter provided an overview of the "instruments" and "sources" of power that facilitates categorization and comparison of the forces presented in this study:

The theoretical literature usually outlines three *instruments* of power: coercion, whereby submission is won by threat or use of force; compensation, whereby agreement is purchased; and conditioning, which shapes beliefs through persuasion, education, or social commitment to what seems right. Closely related to these instruments of power are three *sources* of power: personality, property, and organization. Personality in the shape of a business or political leader usually depends on an ability to persuade through the instrument of conditioning. The power of property, on the other hand, usually depends on its compensatory, purchasing ability.... The most significant modern source of power is organization, operating mostly through the instrument of conditioning. If the organization is the state, it also has coercive power and the compensatory instrument because of its vast connection to property.¹

This basic outline of theory provides a clear framework to arrange and assess the myriad of governments, bureaucratic institutions and interest groups that compete for limited resources and support at various levels in military development.

The military's plans and proposals were influenced by forces within and outside of the government. Federal departments do not form a monolithic government holding uniform priorities; neither are they faced with the same influences. The Department of Militia and Defence (after 1922 the Department of National Defence), represented the military's interests but its priorities and plans were shaped by other bureaucratic forces. During negotiations for the acquisition and use of the Sarnia reserve, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) adopted positions that considered the expressed opinions of the Sarnia Band, legal constraints, the broad policies and aims of the department, and the

¹ Gilbert Stelter, "Power and Place in Urban History" in Power and Place: Canadian Urban Development in the North American Context, Eds. Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 1-2.

desires and designs of local departmental officials. In contrast with the interdepartmental co-operation (or at least collusion) evident in another case where the military acquired Aboriginal land for a training camp,² this case study reveals that DIA officials defended the Band's rights - whether to serve the needs of the Sarcee, those of the department, or both - and did not inherently concede to the wishes of the military. As a result the process was filled with conflicting interests and competing demands between Indian Affairs and the militia. Only through the tenacity of militia officials and their staunch conviction that the land was the only suitable site in the district did the military obtain annual use of the Sarcee Reserve in the period before 1921.

Federal political considerations also had a tangible impact on the timing, scale and location of development projects in Calgary. The election of a Conservative government to Ottawa in 1911 brought "Drill Hall" Sam into Cabinet with a "citizen army" agenda, and R.B. Bennett into office as a Member of Parliament. Bennett's desire to have a majestic armoury built on a prominent location in central Calgary superceded any possibility of a scaled-down project that might have adequately served the local military's needs. Similarly, although the requirement for permanent force barracks at Calgary was articulated early after the end of the First World War, such a project was not undertaken for more than a decade. It was Bennett's power as prime minister and the context of federal relief measures during the Depression that made the rapid development of the massive Currie Barracks project happen in four short years. Federal political influences on development took several forms, reflecting bureaucratic and executive interests and broad socio-economic circumstances.

The nature and depth of the defence department's involvement in the acquisition and development of property for military purposes was found to be case dependent. When military officials at the local and national levels agreed that the most suitable training lands in the Calgary area were portions of the Sarcee Indian Reserve, the Department of Militia and Defence approached Indian Affairs. The military had little to no coercive power, given that the legal consent of both the DIA and the Band was needed in order that the military could acquire the land for training and camping. With finite

² See P.W. Lackenbauer, "Combined Operation: The Appropriation of Stoney Point Reserve and the

resources at the military's disposal, the instrument of compensation was of limited appeal; certainly other interests would be willing to pay more for the same land. Conditioning (trying to convince the Indians and the DIA that the military's need was both genuine and acute) was the key instrument of power available to the DMD before 1915, but the department's pleas alone proved unsuccessful in securing dependable, perennial use of the reserve. The First World War changed the balance somewhat by substantiating the military's requirement for training space and, coupled with the downturn in local land values after 1913, lessening the desirability of an outside land sale. Only in this context did the DMD succeed in obtaining rights to the reserve land.

The local and national military organizations made different contributions to subsequent proposals and negotiations for the construction of Mewata Armoury and later Currie Barracks. In the case of acquiring a site in Mewata Park, the military lobbied City officials as an "interest group" and delegated direct negotiating control to the local Member of Parliament (Bennett). In the 1930s, the military drew up plans for Currie barracks and worked with local and political officials throughout the development process. The Chief of the General Staff met with the Calgary mayor directly, while Prime Minister Bennett again acted as the chief negotiator with the City and personally spearheaded the project. In the latter two cases, the military recognized that its powers were limited in the context of local development. As a result, a politician rather than a military official served as the main federal spokesperson with the community and he achieved hard-fought success. Political leverage was exerted through a political office rather than departmentally. There were benefits and drawbacks to linking military projects to a political face. A specific politician could solicit partisan opposition which impeded military development; conversely, politicians also provided executive political power not at the disposal of the militia department.

These case studies elucidate the importance of interactions between different layers of government. During the debate over the Mewata Park site, the provincial government opposed the scheme on a partisan basis with a resultant delay in the transfer of the property. However, it was federal-municipal rather than federal-provincial

relations that figured most prominently in these case studies. While municipalities are not constitutionally-mandated governments in Canada, they do have key interests and influence in local development. The City of Calgary and local politicians influenced military projects in various ways. When the military tried to acquire portions of the Sarcee Reserve for a camp and training area, the City competed for scarce land. In this case, the City itself was an indirect constraint on the military plans. Controversies over Mewata Park and the permanent force barracks scheme brought the military, federal politicians and the municipal government into more direct contact. Facing conflicting pressures from local interests, the mayor and City Council were often non-committal to federal proposals unless pushed to make a decision. In the end, the City recognized that local military development meant sizeable injections of money into the local economy and thus acquiesced to federal pressures when faced with the threat of lost or down-sized projects. Like most municipalities, the City of Calgary derived its main source of power through control of municipal property and used this as leverage with the federal government. City officials tried to use the negotiating process to shape development plans into less controversial forms. In the case of Currie Barracks they succeeded in obtaining direct control over portions of the project and concomitant finances. The City pressed its viewpoint on federal politicians and government officials, won some important concessions, and set the pace of development through its reticence or defiance. As much as the municipality was dependent upon senior levels of government, the City recognized the critical resources it possessed and the powers it had over local development. Even when it was unsuccessful in its appeals to federal and provincial authorities, the local government could not be considered a "passive observer."

In military property development, citizen participation extends beyond the delegation of responsibility to selected individuals during elections. These case studies offer examples of a broad spectrum of interest groups³ that mobilized in response to

³ The terminology used to identify the functions and characteristics of various interest groups is borrowed from Michael S. Whittington and Richard van Loon, Canadian Government and Politics: Institutions and Processes (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1996), 440-6, 452. For "sporadic pressure groups," attempts to influence government policy represent a small percentage of the overall activity of the group. "True" interest groups are set up deliberately to represent the political interests of members and to collectively lobby policy makers. Interest groups represent their members on an ongoing basis, communicate messages

military development plans and the sources and instruments of power they utilized. Sporadic pressure groups such as athletic organizations and proponents of civic playgrounds lobbied to preserve Mewata Park. "True" interest groups like the Calgary Trades and Labour Council and United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America strongly opposed the construction of Currie Barracks. The Calgary Board of Trade and Construction Industry Association were special-interest groups that supported military development projects to further the interests of the local business community. They were opposed by more broad-based public-interest groups like the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and some members of the United Church in the Currie case.

Of course, few of these interest groups operated alone. In the fight over Mewata Park, interest groups that opposed the project formed an *ad hoc* coalition on an issue-basis. For some opponents the debate was about the potential loss of finite parkland; for others it appeared to have been a partisan issue. In the case of the proposed permanent force barracks in the 1930s, pre-existing coalitions (like that between women's peace organizations, socialists, and various churches) mobilized on an ideological level to try and counter what they perceived to be growing militarism. Opposition focused on potential ramifications of the plan on the local community and society in general (as a manifestation of a global threat to peace). In both the Mewata and Currie cases, interest groups lobbied at both the local and federal levels. The main sources of power available to these groups were organization *en masse* and individual personality. The number of constituents represented by a group, its strength and the unity of conviction amongst its members, and the access to decision-makers all contributed to the power available, as did the influence of dedicated and charismatic individuals. Opponents employed conditioning as their instrument of choice, using newspapers, public assemblies and letters to try to solicit support from politicians and citizens. They made impassioned pleas for broad social commitment to what they believed was right. On the other hand, proponents of military development focused on compensation (as well as conditioning) to

to political decision-makers, and perform an aggregation function by "bring[ing] together individuals with common concerns about government policy" out of a belief that acting in combination has a greater impact on government.

stress the benefits the community would accrue from development, and appealed to powerful politicians to use coercion when opposition mounted. The vast array of interest groups assembling and colliding in these case studies reflected the plural dimensions of society at the time.

There were other influential groups. The Sarcee Band had to consent to the surrender of any portion of the reserve set aside for them under treaty. Band members derived their power from the possession of prime property near Calgary, and repelled several early attempts by the military to acquire use of their lands. The local media reflected and shaped perspectives held by the local community regarding the various development schemes through editorials and selective coverage. As rabidly partisan as the press was in the early part of this century, local editors ensured that property development issues remained politically charged. Calgary newspapers were a means of disseminating information and provided a forum for contentious debate. In addition, the Prime Minister's local political organization played a key role in decision-making during the construction of Currie Barracks. Bennett relied heavily upon information obtained from the Tory faithful in Calgary to determine who should be allowed to tender for construction projects and to assess the relative consideration he should give to local concerns.

It is easy in the study of 'land' and 'buildings,' and broad political and institutional forces, to write people out of the story. Such an omission would be an unfortunate oversight; even within interest groups and organizations power was exerted by individuals and not just anonymous agents. In keeping with Creighton's depiction of history as "character and circumstance," the development of Calgary's military properties was an embodiment of both. Different individuals had different motivations, aspirations and visions, and were in turn subjected to various external pressures. Their expressed interests ranged from Bull Head's deep conviction that Sarcee lands should never be surrendered, to Mayor Sinnott's reservations over the transfer of Mewata Park, to F.E. Spooner's appeals to the Prime Minister in support of barracks construction in 1934. There was one man that proved an overwhelming force. R.B. Bennett was a longtime supporter of Calgary's military growth, and he had the strength and character of spirit to

spearhead projects in the face of adversity. His personality and political organization were key sources of power, and he used the instruments at his disposal to the fullest extent needed to achieve his goals. When conditioning and compensation failed to achieve the desired results, Bennett turned to coercion and threatened City officials with what they stood to lose. He had the political will and tenacity to carry the Mewata project through to completion. In the midst of the Depression, when circumstances prevented major military expenditures, he used socio-economic need as a justification to further mold the face of Calgary's military through the Currie Barracks initiative. If Calgary did not embrace the idea of being a "Garrison Town" from the onset, Bennett's relentless commitment to military development in the city was key to its conception.

The term "military history" usually evokes ideas of soldiers on distant battlefields, maps with an array of arrows indicating troop movements, and acts of individual and regimental heroism. When military historians, and the few scholars who explore defence resource management issues, explore civil-military relations in Canada, they tend to focus on decision-making in Ottawa. Players at the national level, who make the macro-level decisions, are seen to embody the collective experience and consciousness of Canadian citizens and soldiers. Although such historical pursuits must not be abandoned, a more comprehensive understanding of military decision-making requires broader consideration. Historians must pay heed to Clausewitz's oft-quoted maxim that war is merely "politics by another means," recognizing that in the context of Canadian federalism politics operate concurrently on multiple levels.

As a study in 'military history' this thesis tests the boundaries of traditional methodology, drawing upon unconventional sources like City Council records (as far as military history goes) and exploring decision-making beyond the national level. However, if the historical craft is to be relevant to Canadians (as Jack Granatstein has advocated in a recent book⁴) and if historians are to engage in debates over the evolution of this country (and not leave all important discussions of the past to journalists operating at a local level), studies such as this are both timely and relevant. This thesis demonstrates that an examination of the historical record regarding military property

⁴ See J.L. Granatstein, Who Killed Canadian History? (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1998).

development must acknowledge the role of social and political forces beyond those within the military and in Ottawa. It deals with a subject that continues to generate interest amongst citizens, bureaucrats and politicians (especially in light of dramatic changes in the physical presence of the Canadian military this decade), and touches upon a whole range of themes that are relatively uninvestigated by historians. It is "national" history in that it links Ottawa-level decision-making to the local level and involves prominent federal politicians and bureaucrats. It is also "local" history by providing insight into municipal politics, the mobilization of interest groups, the roles of the local media, and the relationship between Calgary, the federal government, and the military. It is multidisciplinary in the questions that it poses, the academic literature that it draws upon, and the themes that it explores. A sampling of ideas borrowed from several disciplines (history, political science, public administration, and planning and development) facilitates a novel approach to explore, describe and explain military property development. This study proves that, in order to better understand the military's physical presence across this country, it is equally imperative to explore the national and local dynamics that influence development.

In 1997, journalist Dave Chidley bridged the gap between past and present with lament: "The troops are gone, the buildings locked up and the move out of Calgary is virtually complete - Canadian Forces Base Calgary is a ghost town. Only distant reminders remain of what was once a vibrant military community inside the city's limits."⁵ The recent cacophony in the Calgary media over redevelopment schemes at Currie Barracks evokes similar images of the distant origins of the property. Although most of the buildings still stand as they did in the late 1930s, their purposes have changed. "Garrison Woods" is now home to film production and housing projects. The former Camp Sarcee (Harvey Barracks) property faces a different future. Many of the military buildings have already been torn down. Squatters continue to occupy "Blackfoot Crossing" and environment cleanup continues. New controversies have replaced those that faced the original development of the sites. New interest groups protest where old ones lobbied. The media continues to cast decision-making as a political rather than a

⁵ Dave Chidley, "Taps for city base," Calgary Sun, 25 August 1997.

military process. New political faces have replaced the old, still perpetuating partisan tensions that make federal and municipal decision-making tenuous and controversial. The permanent force regiments have moved to Edmonton, justifying Bennett's fears fifty years after the fact. Insofar as the military is concerned, Calgary has made the transition from garrison town to military ghost town.

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Appendix A: District Officers Commanding, Military District No. 13¹

Military District No. 13 (MD 13), with headquarters in Calgary, existed from June 1907 to December 1946. During this period the following officers held the appointment of District Officer Commanding (DOC). Ranks and dates shown were those held at the time the appointment was relinquished:

Colonel	S.B. Steele, CB, MVO	15 Jun 1907 – 30 Apr 1909
Brig-Gen	E.A. Cruikshank	1 May 1909 – 28 Feb 1917
Colonel	G. Macdonald	1 Mar 1917 – 9 Feb 1919
Brig-Gen	H.F. Macdonald, CMG, DSO	10 Feb 1919 – 30 Nov 1919
Brig-Gen	A.H. Bell, CMG, DSO	1 Dec 1919 – 28 Feb 1925
Colonel	W.W.P. Gibsons, CMG, DSO, OBE	1 Mar 1925 – 30 Apr 1928
Brig	D.M. Ormond, CMG, DSO	1 May 1928 – 31 Jul 1932 ^a
Brig	H.H. Matthews, CMG, DSO	27 Nov 1932 – 31 Jan 1935
Brig	D.W.B. Spry, OBE, VD	1 Feb 1935 – 12 Apr 1937
Brig	J.L.H. Bogart, DSO	13 Apr 1937 – 12 Oct 1937
Brig	G.R. Pearkes, VC, DSO, MC	2 Jan 1938 ^b – 16 Oct 1939
Brig	C.E. Connolly, DSO	27 Dec 1939 – 19 Oct 1940
Brig	F.M.W. Harvey, VC, MC	4 Nov 1940 – 30 Nov 1945
Colonel	T.E. D'O. Snow, CBE	1 Dec 1945 – 31 Dec 1946

¹ Historical Section (GS) Army Headquarters, "District Officers Commanding Military District No. 13," 1 September 1960, DHH, 169.065 (D2).

^a Retired effective 31 July 1932. The AA & QMG (Lt-Col D.J. Macdonald, DSO, MC, was detailed to command temporarily 1 June 1932 to 26 Nov 1932).

^b Lt-Col C.V. Stockwell, DSO (RCA) was acting DOC from 13 Oct 1937 to 1 Jan 1938.

Appendix B: "Big Sarcee Camp Opens Next Month," *Calgary Herald*²

BIG SARCEE CAMP OPENS NEXT MONTH

Everything will Be Ready on Reserve by the End of May

CITY WATER SUPPLY IS TO BE TAPPED

Large Quantities of Lumber Now Being Hauled to the Scene

It is understood in military circles that the big military camp at the Sarcee Indian reserve, southwest of this city, will be opened about the end of next month. Great activity is already seen on the site of the camp, which is near the Weasel bridge over the Elbow river. Over one car load of lumber is being hauled to the camp every day now, and it is understood that a large force of men will be set to work tomorrow on the work of constructing ordnance stores buildings, army service corps huts, other huts and also the rifle range butts and target pits. The work is being undertaken by the Canadian Engineers, under Lieut-Col. P. Weatherbe, commanding the engineers in this district. The project will be superintended by Colonel Lowe and Major de Roche, who were responsible for the wonderful performance made at Valcartier, when everything was thrown up in record time.

Will Be Model Camp

The camp will be a model of scientific and hygienic [sic] principles. Everything will be done to prevent an outbreak of disease and the Calgary water supply will be tapped so as to provide the 6,000 soldiers with a bountiful supply of pure water. Shower baths will be provided for the men, and nothing is being overlooked. A local firm started to supply lumber for the camp last Thursday, and since then at least one car load per day had been hauled by motor transport and trails to the camp.

There will be four battalions of infantry and three regiments of mounted rifles, in addition to corps units at the big camp. In all there will be about 6,000 officers and men under canvas, and with the necessary headquarters staffs the pay roll will be very large. It is estimated roughly that at least \$260,000 per month will be paid out in wages to the soldiers. The amount of food consumed at the camp every day will be enormous, and storekeepers are eagerly looking forward to the big camp being opened.

² Herald, 19 April 1915, 1.

Appendix C-1: Letter, Inspector J.A. Markle, Alberta Inspectorate, Red Deer, to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 19 October 1916³

... Mr. Fleetham arranged for a meeting with General Cruikshank on Monday the 18th instant and at that meeting it was decided that the Militia Council be respectfully asked to pay a rental of \$1800.00 for the use of the lands in question for the present fiscal year. The minutes of the board will be enclosed herewith.

General Cruikshank was only authorized to consider the question of the terms of a lease and quite rightly declined to entertain any proposals with reference to the Militia Department purchasing the land in question.

It is, in my opinion, unfortunate for the Indians that a lease was ever granted to the Militia Department for the use of this land. If that Department required it for a training camp, and apparently it did, it would have been far more advantageous to the Indians if it had been sold instead of leasing it for the small sum secured [italics mine] - \$1000.00, I understand, per annum.

Most all land has steadily depreciated in value during the period the Militia Department have been using this land and, moreover, this season about 12 844 yards of coarse gravel has been transferred from a pit to form trails and walks at various points on the surface of this land and without any regard to surveyed roads, simply to meet the requirements of the camp and which are not likely to be in unison with the requirements of any prospective purchaser of the land. The Militia Department may allege, of course, that it will leave these grounds in the same condition as when it took possession. While it is possible to refill the trenches, manholes, &c. and remove refuse I question whether the gravel and the stones referred to could all be thoroughly cleaned up, and the expense, too, would be great to partially carry this allegation into effect.

Under the existing conditions I think every possible effort should be made between the two Departments to arrange for the transfer of this land and on terms fair to the Indians, who quit-claimed this land in the hope and expectation of receiving a good price for it nearly 3 years ago.

I observe in a Departmental letter ... dated the 27th of January, 1913, that this area was likely to command \$120 000.00, or \$150 000.00. Doubtless the interested Indians then thought that they would receive, at least, about the sum named, probably a greater sum.

³ INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

Appendix C-2: Letter, T.I. Fleetham, Indian Agent, Sarcee Agency, Calgary, to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 21 October 1916⁴

... I have the honour to enclose the document "Board of Inquiry" investigating existing conditions and reporting upon an advisable procedure regarding the leasing of a portion of Sarcee Indian Reserve for Military Camp purposes which as far as rental is concerned I trust will be found satisfactory.

The question of purchase was not gone into only in a casual way [sic], General Cruickshanks [sic] having no instructions on the matter.

I also enclose ... [a] statement of gravel used by the Military Engineer.

The Indians will certainly expect the land to be left in the same condition as it was before been [sic] taken over.

I am enclosing a blue print of general plan of the Sarcee Camp at present showing exactly what has been done, and to put everything back into their [sic] original position would mean the expenditure of a large sum, probably thousands of dollars.

The value of the land should be considered as on the date the Militia Department took charge of this property April 1914 and not at the present time.

If land is not purchased then the 12,000 yards of gravel will have to be paid for at 25 cents per yard in addition to depreciation of the site.

It is certainly up to the Indian Department to act according to their letter of 2nd January 1914 ... in the interests of their wards, wherein they clearly state

"The Department is desirous of disposing of this land in the best interests of the Indians so as to obtain the highest price for it."

I am therefore of the opinion that it would be to the advantage of the Militia Department to purchase it outright at once, for say \$150,000.00 which is \$84,000.00 less than the estimated value made by Mr. Surveyor Steele and myself, which I have no doubt could have been secured if the land had been promptly put on the market.

In conclusion, I am personally of the opinion that if General Cruickshanks [sic] is asked by the Department of Militia his recommendation would meet with a favorable reply. I trust the Indian Department will therefore be able to bring this matter to a favorable conclusion in the interests of Sarcee Indians and themselves.

⁴ INAC, PARC, File 772/32-4-145-32 Vol. 1.

Appendix D: Special Armoury Committee of City Council - Report⁵

Your special committee appointed to look into the question of armoury site begs leave to report and recommend as follows:

1. Your committee interviewed R.B. Bennett, K.C., M.P., and Col. Armstrong of the 103rd Rifles. Careful consideration was given to the following sites: The barracks ground, Victoria park, west half of block 56, plan A1, and Mewata park.

In discussing the matter with Mr. Bennett, the government's representative here, the following information was given your committee:

- (a) The original application of the government was for a plot 400 feet square: we are now informed that a piece of land 300 feet square would be quite sufficient for their purposes.⁶
- (b) That the ground adjacent to and surrounding the proposed armoury site in Mewata park would not be used for drill grounds, or other military purposes.
- (c) That the cost of the proposed armory would be approximately \$350,000.00.
- (d) That the proposed armory building will be placed at the disposal of, and could be used by the city as a public auditorium or for other public uses when occasions arise to use a building for this purpose.
- (e) Tentative plans which have been prepared by the government architects were laid before your committee for their inspection. These plans called for the erection of a large and handsome building, providing for gymnasiums, baths, bowling alleys, billiard and pool table accommodations, reading and recreation rooms, etc. The style of architecture and the location of this commanding edifice, facing down Eighth avenue, is in accordance with the ideas of Thos. Mawson, expert town planner for the city of Calgary.
- (f) The building itself would cover an area of 300 ft. by 260 ft.
- (g) The Dominion government have included in their estimates for the year 1913 the sum of \$150,000.00 to be expended this year on an armory in Calgary. Your committee was informed by Mr. Bennett that if transfer of the Mewata park site was made immediately, the work on the building could be started this summer. This

⁵ Herald, 16 August 1913, 1, 11.

⁶ These dimensions were obviously incorrect, and should have read 400x400 ft. (160,000 sq.ft.) and 300x300 ft. (90,000 sq.ft.) respectively.

would be of aid to the workmen of Calgary, as building trades are rather sick this year.

(h) The point has been raised that the city cannot legally transfer any portion of Mewata park to the government, but Mr. Bennett gave assurance that so soon as the city is prepared to deed a portion of Mewata park to the Dominion government for armory purposes, the said government will then immediately remove restrictions which prevent the transfer of this property.

2. Your committee is of the opinion that the erection of an armory in Calgary would be advantageous to the city in many respects. There are a large number of young men and youths who for lack of accommodation wherein they may enjoy or employ their leisure hours, within healthy and invigorating surroundings, under existing conditions they will of necessity frequent hotels, pool rooms, etc., and we feel that if said armory were built here a large number of these men would take steps so as to avail themselves of the opportunities for healthful recreation amid pleasant and helpful surroundings.
3. Your committee would point out that owing to the modified requirements of the government in reference to the area needed by them, that only one playing field in Mewata park would be encroached upon, and the athletes using Mewata park, when the building is completed, would be allowed to use the gymnasium and other conveniences as contained therein. This would be a boon to many of our athletes.
4. Of the sites considered by your committee, no other would lend itself to the style of building which it is proposed to erect here, and we would also point out that the cost of another armory site would purchase many athletic fields.
5. Your committee has taken the liberty of inviting Mr. Bennett to address the council at the meeting on August 18, and Mr. Bennett has notified your committee that he will be pleased to accept this invitation at the pleasure of the council.

After due consideration your committee is of the opinion that Mewata park is the best of the sites under consideration, and would recommend that the necessary procedure be taken to transfer to the government a plot of land [300 x] 300 ft...., and situate in Mewata park, facing Eighth avenue, and abutting Eleventh street west, and more particularly shown on blue print attached hereto, and that the mayor and clerk be authorized to execute said papers.

Appendix E: Letter from the Local Militia Regarding the Mewata Park Site⁷

To,
The Mayor and Council

City of Calgary.

Gentlemen;-,

We would respectfully draw your attention to the urgency of having the Transfer of the site for the Armoury in Mewata Park made to the Government at an early date.

At the present time some 1000 of the Active Militia are placed at a very great disadvantage and expense, and other branches of the Service not yet in Calgary are held back because there is no accommodation for them.

We are informed at Ottawa, the Government are waiting on the Council of the City of Calgary for this Transfer, and as soon as completed will hasten the construction of the building, which will take Two Years to build, it will be the largest building in Calgary and one of the finest in the Dominion.

We would respectfully state this Armoury is of the most vital importance to the progress of the City of Calgary as a Military centre.

We have the honour to be

Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Militia of Calgary,

Your Obedient Servants,

E. MacDonald Lt. Colonel
15th Light Horse

W. Brown Lt. Colonel
103rd. Regiment.

H. D. Kirk Major
Army Service Corp.

C. F. de la R. D. 10 Major
Corp of Guides.

A. H. G. G. G. Captain
Army Medical Corp.

⁷ Undated letter [1913], City Clerk's Department, Box 100, File 412.

Appendix F: The Debate in The Albertan: Point and Counterpoint⁸

Letter to the Editor

PEACE WOMEN'S COMPLAINT

Editor, The Albertan:

The introduction of a military centre into any city automatically fosters the military spirit and attitude of mind. The erection of such an establishment in Calgary is incompatible with the stand taken by a mass meeting of Calgary citizens, presided over by the Bishop of the Anglican church two or three months ago. It is contrary to the opinions voiced from many pulpits a few days ago. Has the conscience of the people changed in so short a time? Has the Ministerial Association undergone a change of conscience since that time?

Does the character of a military barracks and airport cease to be military because the Prime Minister expresses a threat to change the site to some other part of Alberta? To peace societies, this "Volte face" seems to be a betrayal of principle. To accept a monetary advantage that entails a moral risk has the appearance of an undue deference to Mammon (?). In our opinion a works program for relief purposes should aim directly at the social betterment of the unemployed.

We regret profoundly that the Federal government details for this city or this province, or any other province, a military barracks and airport as part of their works projects for relief.

On behalf of the Calgary Branch of the Women's International League for Peace

RACHEL A. COUTTS

⁸ Calgary Albertan, 5 July 1934, 4.

Editorial Response**"A MEASLY MILLION"**

A great deal of nonsense has been spoken and written in connection with the building of new quarters for the permanent force troops and district sub-staff here. Some of the speakers and writers are honestly convinced that it is not the best thing to do. Perhaps it is not. Most of these are obviously misinformed. A lady correspondent who appears to have been under the impression that no troops have ever been quartered in Calgary before and completely unaware that they are so quartered in the city at this very moment and have been for the past thirty years, raises a fear of the moral effect; which is rather impolite to a class of men who, with their ancestors, have been demonstrating the honor and integrity of British soldiers for several centuries. Others again are just plain politicians with the grudge against the authorities who recognize any pebble fit for the political sling. No Communist from the Third International was ever so wily in stirring up a tempest in a teapot and no unhappy dupe ever so gullible as those who have allowed themselves to become agitated. Most of them ought to know better.

Alderman Humble made an amusing contribution to the discussion the other evening when he accused the Dominion Government of setting one city against another, vying [*sic*] with one another, we are led to suppose, as to who will get the "measly million dollars" for relief work. Alderman Humble himself has been one of the most vocal of the self-anointed champions of the unemployed, often to the embarrassment of the said unemployed, and sometimes to the prejudice of their cause, so one wonders why he speaks so very sniffingly about a "measly million dollars" to be spent for their benefit. Yes, for their benefit were it not so it is not probable that the work, though long overdue, would be done even now. As for the idea of pitting one city against another in a competition to secure this large public work and all the immediate and potential benefits, merely from a business point of view, if the Prime Minister pointed out that if the City of Calgary did not wish to have the work done here there were other cities which would be glad of it he was only telling us the obvious. We are aware now that there were other cities ready to invite the Dominion Government to transfer the district headquarters and other troops and some of the aldermen of their councils were not even in favour of waiting for Calgary's decision before putting in bids.

Appendix G: Tenders For Barracks Construction (January 1935)⁹

For Barrack Building Block No. 2:

Company	Tender "A" For the whole of the work including a forced hot-water heating system as shown on the plans and described in the specifications.	Tender "B" For the whole of the work but to include a steam heating system as described in the specifications.
Bennett & White Construction Co. Ltd., Calgary * awarded the contract	\$156,352 If Cochrane hard blue sandstone used in lieu of artificial stone add \$2,130. If all-Canadian steel used also add \$5,857.	\$155,559
Buchan Construction Co., Calgary	\$168,000 If Cochrane sandstone used in lieu of artificial stone add \$1,792. If zonolite used instead of mineral wool insulation deduct \$3,476. If single phase motor used add \$420. If all-Canadian structural steel used add \$2,660.	\$167,176
Forster Construction Co., Calgary	\$175,000	\$174,209
Hughes & Hurst, Calgary	\$179,921 (Either Dunham or Webster systems) If Cochrane stone used in lieu of artificial stone add \$1,676. If rolled sections are to be used as per specifications deduct \$2,490.	\$179,128
McDonald Bros., Contractors, Calgary	\$174,457 If blue sandstone used prices are: \$177,407 If structural steel allowed furnishing build-up sections add \$2,490, plus cost of winter heating.	\$173,244 \$176,194
J.A. Tweddle Ltd.	\$174,654 If Cochrane stone used in lieu of artificial stone add \$1,276.	\$173,000
Watson & Abercrombie, Calgary	\$182,347 For Cochrane stone add \$1,842. If 2" zonolite substituted for 2" rock wool deduct \$3,000. If all-Canadian build-up sections used add \$2,490.	\$180,721

For the mess building:

Forster Construction Co. Ltd. * awarded the contract	\$147,800 \$147,250 - if copper pipe used instead of brass pipe in plumbing and heating. These prices are based on the use of all-Canadian sections in structural steel.
Buchan Construction Co.	\$150,274 \$150,619 - if all-Canadian sections are used in structural steel.
J.A. Tweddle Ltd.	\$152,650
Hughes & Hurst	\$156,900 \$156,300 - if copper pipe used instead of brass pipe in plumbing and heating.
Watson & Abercrombie Ltd.	\$157,257 \$157,602 - if all-Canadian sections are used in structural steel. - if copper pipe used instead of brass pipe in plumbing and heating. \$156,657
McDonald Bros.	\$160,722 \$161,067 - if all-Canadian sections are used in structural steel.

⁹ House of Commons, Debates, 31 January 1935, 343-44.