

observed in its November 20, 1912, issue that the show was: "proving to be a great boon to the local real estate men who are numbered among the exhibitors. Their booths are all elaborately fitted up and a staff of salesmen are on hand to cater to prospective buyers."

The *Edmonton Journal* articles on the fair also confirmed public interest

*A few months ago when things seemed rather quiet along the real estate rialto, some dealers predicted that the early winter would witness a remarkable revival in city and district property. The pessimist said it was "hot air" or something to that effect. But the pessimist as is usually the case was entirely wrong. The activity "boom," some people call it has arrived and it promises to be one of the biggest in the history of the city.*

The Edmonton and western Canadian real estate market by 1912 had become a giant selling scheme on the verge of collapse. Its decline began in June 1913.

This pre-World War boom era is important to the history of the Edmonton Real Estate

Board because it shows the first attempt to establish organized real estate. The Edmonton Real Estate Exchange was an early form of multiple listing bureau in which companies cooperated in the sharing of listings. It also endeavoured to promote a high standard of business ethics at a time when land speculation was rampant. The organization of the Exchange would also establish the importance of standing committees. All of these features would be incorporated into the way later organizations would operate through to the present day.

Various real estate schemes left a generally negative public image of the industry. This negative reputation would take years to eliminate.

The railway boom had expanded the city in population and physical size. Edmonton became the capital of the new Province of Alberta and one of the five major urban centres in western Canada. The extra land incorporated into the city because of land speculation would also eliminate the need for further annexations until after World War Two.

## War and Depression 1914-1939

The collapse of the western Canadian real estate market in 1913 was unexpected, at least to the boosters, and severe. It did, however, stop large scale land speculation for a while. A vast amount of subdivided land on the fringes of Edmonton remained undeveloped.

The Hudson's Bay Co. Reserve, which had been the cause of such excitement in 1912, also remained undeveloped until Blatchford Field was established, now known as The Edmonton Municipal Airport.

During the recession, the real estate community throughout Alberta came to realize the need for some form of regulation for their members. In 1927, members of the real estate industry of Edmonton established the Edmonton Real Estate Association. This organization struggled for years to survive but it kept alive the idea of organized real estate. It was responsible for the passage of the first act to regulate the industry. Modifications to that act in future years and cooperation between the government and industry as a result of its passage brought substantial benefits to the whole industry and to the general public.

### Recession

From 1900 to 1912, unprecedented levels of public and private investment financed Edmonton's expansion as a transportation, industrial, and commercial centre. Many people moving to Edmonton also contributed to its growth. The recession of 1913 and World War One, however, brought an end to this flow of investment and immigration and thus an end to Edmonton's boom town psychology. Edmonton suffered when financial, human, and material resources were taken from frontier development and put towards the war effort because few war-related industries were developed in Edmonton.

Boosterism was replaced with patriotism as future expansion was deferred in the interest of winning the war.

### Collapse of the land boom

World War One marked a basic and inevitable adjustment in Edmonton's economy unrelated to the events in Europe. This change was noted by H. M. E. Evans, the chairman of the recently established Edmonton Board of Public Welfare, in his first annual report. The economic expansion, he noted: "could not last and (it) showed unmistakable signs of passing even before the out-

break of the War. Therefore, while the sudden collapse in the autumn of 1914 forced the matter urgently on our attention and the operations of the Board for that year were mainly in the nature of emergency relief measures, the problem was inevitable and will be permanent."

The collapse of the urban real estate market left an oversupply of land available for development. This problem was not solved by the war or the postwar recovery during the late 1920s. From 1920 to 1938, the city laid out on paper during the boom was dismantled.

This meant many subdivisions such as Mayfair Park (where Hawrelak Park is now) were cancelled. Plans for the development of a civic centre were also abandoned.



*Downtown Edmonton is shown in 1929. The Hotel Macdonald was the most prominent site on the Edmonton skyline from 1916 to the 1960s.*

(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-64-2)

The legacy of the pre-World War One railway boom was that Edmonton was now a city covering 40.8 square miles (105.67 square km) or 26,342 acres (10,668.51 hectares) of which only 4,730 acres (1,915.65 hectares) or 18 percent was serviced with water and sewer lines. The city was committed through annexation agreements to extend water and sewer services to much of the undeveloped land in the suburban zones. The suburban zones, although divided into blocks and lots, were basically agricultural land. Yet its assessed value before 1921 was inflated from an average of \$100 per acre (\$250 per hectare), which would have been reasonable, to \$274 per acre (\$685 per hectare). Because of the financial stringency of the time, it became very difficult to collect the taxes that were levied on the lots in this area. By September 1915 the solvency of the city was threatened. The city responded with a massive tax sale of much of this property.

One obvious effect was the drastic drop in the number of real estate firms listed in the *Henderson's Directory*, which went from a peak of 333 in 1914, to 101 in 1920. The Radial Realty Co., whose reason for being had been the promotion of the outside subdivisions, did not survive.

Lou Weber's company survived by diversifying into insurance. He was joined by his brother N. Roy Weber in 1915 to establish Weber Brothers. N. Roy Weber had originally come west in 1911 but had settled in Calgary where he was employed by the Winnipeg-based Walch Land Co. He rose to become manager and then exclusive agent of this company before it went out of business during

the First World War. The partnership between Lou and Roy proved to be very successful, with Roy being primarily concerned with real estate while Lou handled the insurance side. The company dealt in fire insurance at first but branched out into other lines, particularly automobile insurance.

In 1923 the brothers incorporated the first automobile finance company in the province, the Edmonton Credit Co.

Other brokers, such as Ed Molstad who had been involved with the Fort George Land Co., also switched to other endeavours such as insurance. In 1916, Molstad became branch manager of Excelsior Life Insurance Co. and later became district superintendent.

H. M. E. Evans had other problems in addition to the decline in investment and the drop in the real estate market. On June 10, 1914, the Canadian Agency failed. Evans was able to acquire the stock of the Western Canada Mortgage Co. and the Western Homebuildings Ltd. upon which he built new companies, including H. M. E. Evans and Co., Homevans Investment Ltd., and British Alberta Investments Ltd. In addition to reconstructing his own business career, he played an active role in civic affairs to help Edmontonians cope with the end of the boom.

### *Economic expansion in the late 1920s*

The recession that began in 1913 and continued after World War One ended in the mid-1920s. Settlement of the Peace River Country resumed and an oil boom temporarily rekindled the expectations of the pre-World War One era. The oil boom in Alberta was stimulated by developments in the Turner Valley oil field and in the Wainwright area.

According to prosperity advertisements in various western newspapers, land purchases and immigration to the Prairies in 1928 were far ahead of anything since pre-war days. Unemployment had given way to actual labour shortages.

The prosperity of the late 1920s did not result in the same type of land speculation as before. Even so, the *Edmonton Journal* in a March 29, 1928, article did see a glimmer of hope for a return to boom times.



*An important addition to the central business district during the interwar period was the new Canadian National Railways station, which opened on March 17, 1928.*  
(City of Edmonton Archives, B 6102)

*Boom times were somewhat approached on Tuesday morning when numerous sales of city lots were approved by the commissioners. The morning's transfers proved to be the heaviest in point of numbers that the city has handled for some time.*

*Chief among the deals was the sale of a lot at 101 Street and 106 Avenue to a gasoline supply company for \$3,600 cash.*

*Under another deal which involved the sale of four city lots at 97 Street and 115 Avenue in Norwood, there was a yield of \$1,300 cash. The purchaser has agreed to proceed with the erection of four modern bungalows, each costing \$3,000 on this property.*

*The city has also sold a lot at 88 Street and 117 Avenue in Norwood for \$225 cash, while a building in the Rutherford addition brought \$100 cash. Three lots in Forest Heights were sold for \$100.*

The sale of city land virtually came to a halt. The City of Edmonton continued to be the major land owner until after World War Two.

The increased sale of city land during the late 1920s was no portent of future events. On October 29, 1929, the New York Stock

Exchange crashed, followed by the Canadian stock market crash. The Great Depression had begun. The news of the crash in New York did not have an immediate effect on the Edmonton real estate market. On January 18, 1930, it was reported that: "the first big real estate deal in Edmonton city property this year and the first for some time was consummated Friday afternoon when the Fairburn Apartments were purchased for \$60,000." By the end of January 1930, though, drastic drops in wheat prices were being reported in Winnipeg. Between January 1930 and January 1931 the price of Number 1 Northern Wheat fell from \$1.11 to 34 cents per bushel. Effects of the Depression on real estate lasted until the beginning of World War Two.

*The Birks Building on Jasper Avenue and 104th Street was constructed at the end of the 1920s.*  
(Edmonton Real Estate Board)



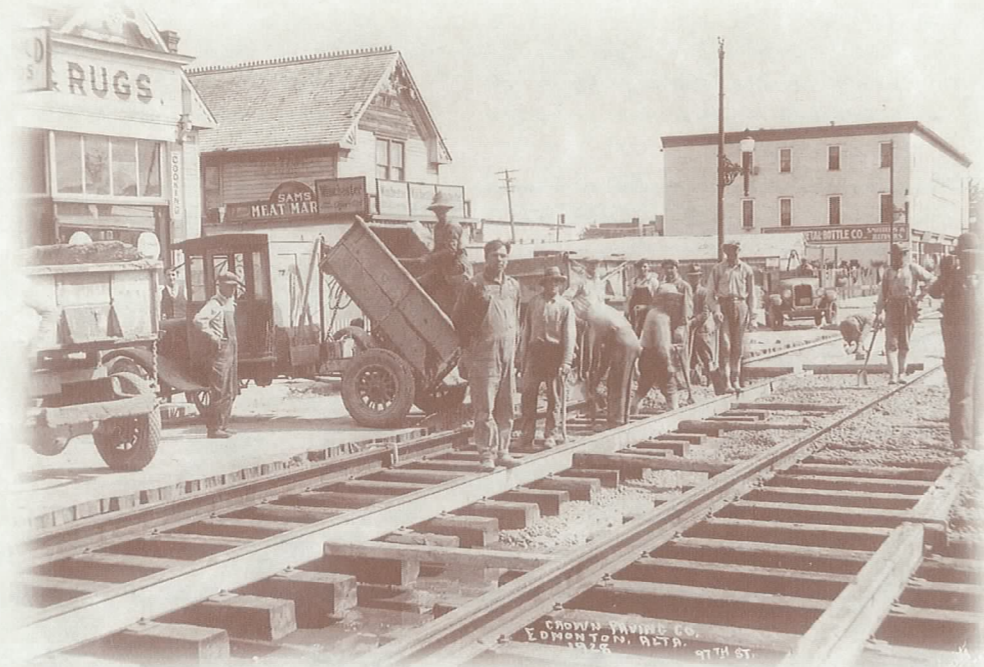
*The Garneau district shown here in 1930 was established during the pre-World War One boom.*

(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-10-159)



Street railway construction in 1928 on 97th Street. The late 1920s was a period of economic growth for Edmonton.

(Provincial Archives of Alberta, A 10100)



### Creation of the Edmonton Real Estate Association

The economic upsurge of the late 1920s lasted long enough for the real estate industry in Edmonton to re-establish an association. On September 25, 1926, a meeting organized by J. D. O. Mothersill, an Edmonton lawyer, and John McIntosh, land agent for the Hudson's Bay Co., was held at the Chamber of Commerce. They discussed the idea of organizing an Edmonton real estate exchange. Andy Whyte, Percy Barager, Jack Bagley, Frank Lorimer, Elmer Pointer, George Gowan, and John Brown also attended. These men represented Whyte and Co.; Bessey, Bagley and McNanus; Chauvin, Allsopp and Co.; and the General Administration Society.

The men looked at the Vancouver Real Estate Exchange as a model for this new organization. George Gowan provided information on it and circulated a copy of its constitution and bylaws. As noted in Anne Broadfoot's book (published in 1995), *Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, A History of Service, 1919 / 1994*, its members were

*committed to high standards of practice and to advance the interests of the City of Vancouver and greater Vancouver area and its citizens by collection and circulation of valuable and useful information pertaining to the purchase, maintenance and sale of real property.*

*Members also agreed to oppose enactments of laws detrimental to real estate ownership. They guaranteed to subscribe funds for education to upgrade the industry, to adopt and enforce sound rules of business conduct among those engaged in real estate and to develop a strict code of ethics for the protection of the consumer of real estate services.*

A committee was created to investigate the matter further. They presented a report on February 14, 1927, that suggested another form that organized real estate could take. The choice was between forming a new exchange affiliated with the National Real Estate Board, or reviving the Alberta Real Estate Association, whose present officers were residents of Calgary. (The jurisdiction of the new association was to be limited to the territory north of Red Deer.) Another committee was created to resolve the issue of how the Edmonton real estate industry should organize.

The second committee presented their report on February 28, 1927. It advised against forming a real estate exchange because of the difficulty financing its operations and because few Edmonton real estate agents would have the time to devote to making it a success. Those present agreed with these conclusions.

As an alternative to creating an exchange, the committee recommended creating a special committee to speak to Cabinet about applying for legislation on the licensing of real estate



*The establishment of the Edmonton Municipal Airport on the unsold lands of the Hudson's Bay Reserve Co. was another important development in Edmonton during the interwar period.*

(City of Edmonton Archives, EA-10-3181.55.1)

agents. It was also recommended that representatives from Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and other communities be invited to work with the local committee to bring about the passage of this legislation.

After the committee presented its report, an ad hoc legislative committee was appointed to interview the government, and Andy Whyte was delegated to interview officials of the Alberta Real Estate Association about their opinions on this matter.

On March 15, 1927, Jack Bagley reported on the favourable reception the legislative committee had received from Attorney General John Lymburn. Given this success, the committee drafted an act for presentation to the House and hired Joseph Mothersill, of Mothersill and Dyde, to help them prepare the proposed bill. The expenses were to be covered by the Alberta Real Estate Association or by Edmonton real estate agents up to a maximum of \$200.

The initial success of this committee led to the creation of the Edmonton Real Estate Association. After Jack Bagley, chairman of the Legislation Committee, made his report he also moved that a local association be formed to be known as the Edmonton Real Estate Association. This motion was carried unanimously and work began immediately to bring this about.

On March 21, 1927, the nomination committee presented their report. Elected candidates were Frank Lorimer, Jack Bagley,

and Emory Wood. Subsequent presidents through to 1939 included Frank Lorimer, John Joseph Duggan, H. Milton Martin, Ralph Blackmer, Robert H. Watson, N. Roy Weber, Luke Winterburn, John Killen, Sid Lawrie, and Sam Ferris.

When Frank Lorimer was elected president in 1927 he was the manager of the real estate department of Chauvin, Allsopp and Co. He held that position until 1932 when he went into a brief partnership with Robert Watson. In 1933 he established his own company. He served as president again in 1928 and in 1937.

Joseph Duggan was a native of Wales who had come to Edmonton in 1913. He became secretary-treasurer of the Duggan Building and Investment Co. In 1919 he went into partnership with his brother, Milwyn Duggan, and Ray Emmott to form the Duggan and Duggan Real Estate Co. In 1920 he established the J. J. Duggan Co. Ltd., which dealt in insurance investments, loans, and country real estate in the form of ranches and farms. The company was also the general agents for the United Grain Growers' Securities Co. Ltd. He was president of this company until he went into government service in 1935. The Duggan district in the southwest part of Edmonton is named after him. He served as president in 1929.

Joseph Duggan's record of community service began in 1917 when he was elected to the Edmonton Public School Board, where he served three years. He was a member of city

council in 1924 and 1925. Joseph was a member of the Alberta Assessment Commission from 1927 to 1937. He was on the public library board from 1927 to 1933 with the exception of 1931.

H. Milton Martin had already established himself as a community leader before he became president of the Edmonton Real Estate Association in 1930, by serving as chairman of the Town Planning Commission.

Ralph Blackmer arrived in Edmonton in 1918. He was first employed as an accountant for the Western Canada Land Co. By 1924 he had become sales manager of the Western Canada Land Co. and secretary of H. M. E. Evans and Co., Ltd. In 1925 he was placed in charge of the Farm Lands Department of H. M. E. Evans and Co., a position he would hold until his death in 1945. He served as president in 1931.

Robert Watson was an inspector with the General Administration Society, a Montreal-based company which handled real estate as well as insurance. He was a partner in the firm of Lorimer and Watson during his term as president in 1932. After the end of this partnership he worked for Cowan and Co. and eventually moved to Brewster, Cross and Taylor, where he was an insurance adjuster.

N. Roy Weber (as described earlier) was one of the partners in the firm of Weber Brothers. He had joined his brother Lou, to establish the company in 1915. He was a two-term president serving in 1933 and 1934 when the Depression was at its worst in terms of unemployment.

Born in Manchester, England, on June 25, 1878, Luke Winterburn later attended school at Oldham, about seven miles (11 kilometres) from Manchester. He later set up his own firm, Winterburn Motor Haulage Contractors. It was the largest of its kind in Oldham at the time. Luke had five steam wagons, three furniture vans, and half a dozen horses. He recalled hauling a huge gas drum on a steam wagon, with an engine fired by coke, 190 miles (304 kilometres) at a speed of 5 miles (8 kilometres) per hour. The pay was less than \$100.

Luke came to Alberta in 1912, settling first in Fort Macleod. He then went to work with a Dominion survey party in the Rockies for six months. In March 1913 he moved to Edmonton and went into business in the Old Gariepy Block. The name of his firm, taken over from S.

P. Wilson of W. W. Sales, was Northern Brokers. Two years later he joined forces with the Fletcher Realty Co., and some years later went into partnership with Hake to form the company Hake and Winterburn. It was located in the Bellamy Block. He subsequently moved to the Campbell Furniture Building and then to the Agency Building. He served as president in 1935. His business interest also included the development of the subdivisions of Woodland Addition, Balwin and Hawin.

Another arrival from the British Isles was John Killen who came to Edmonton in 1901 from Belfast, Ireland, with the intention of going on to Australia. Instead, he went into the real estate and insurance business with Henry Gilbert in 1902. He remained active in the industry until 1954 and was president of the Edmonton Real Estate Association in 1936.

After ten years in the Edmonton real estate business Sid Lawrie became president of the Board in 1938. In 1928 he had established Lawrie Investment Agencies, which dealt in farm and city property as well as rentals, insurance, loans, and bonds. He was able to survive the Depression by the age-old method of diversifying his services.

Sam Ferris came to Edmonton in 1906. He was born in Shelburne, Ontario. He was educated at Hornings Mills, Shelburne, and Owen Sound, Ontario, and apprenticed in the mercantile business in 1904. Upon his arrival in Edmonton he went to work for the City of Edmonton as a clerk in the electric light department. He became city cashier and pay master in the treasury department in 1910 and assistant city assessor from 1914 to 1918. Sam organized the City Land Department and was superintendent of that department from 1921 to 1928. He quit in 1928 to become manager of Weber Bros. Agencies Ltd., Real Estate Department until 1938, when he established his own firm. He became president of the Edmonton Real Estate Association the following year.

Other individuals who contributed to the Association's operations between 1927 and 1939 but did not serve as president at this time included Andy Whyte and Mark Cummings.

Andy Whyte arrived in Edmonton in 1925. Before that he lived in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, where he was mayor for several years. Born in Leeds, Quebec, in 1865, he worked in various stores until he gained the experience to start his own operations. In 1892

he branched out by starting a chain of stores in Manitoba and in what is now Saskatchewan.

A close associate of Andy Whyte's was Mark Cummings who was born in Virden, Manitoba, in 1901. His first job was in the Union Bank in Rosetown, Saskatchewan. He quit when he found out that his wages did not cover the cost of his frequent moves from one bank to another. He moved to Edmonton in 1932 where he purchased the Hamilton Flour and Feed mill. He established Cummings Agencies Ltd. in 1936 after selling the feed mill. In 1948 he established Western Canada Appraisal Ltd. in partnership with Andy Whyte. He served as president of the Edmonton Real Estate Association in 1947. Mark played a leading role in the establishment of the Alberta Real Estate Association (AREA) and was an active member of the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA). He was made a Life Member of the EREB in recognition of these contributions.



Andy Whyte played a leading role in the creation of the Alberta Real Estate Association and the Canadian Real Estate Association.  
(Edmonton Real Estate Board)

### The first constitution

The drafting of a constitution was completed by April 1927. The National Association of Real Estate Boards' constitution

was taken as a guide, with any articles and clauses not applicable to the operation of a real estate association in Edmonton being struck out.

The constitution of the new Association was a detailed document that dealt with objectives, membership, government, and ethics. It remained largely unchanged until the 1940s.

The first objective was: "to unite the real estate men of this community for the purpose of exerting effectively a combined influence upon matters affecting real estate interests."

The second objective was to encourage the adoption of rules and regulations to facilitate business transactions by its members.

The third objective was to promote and enforce high standards of conduct by its members based on the code of ethics.

A final objective was to advance the civic development and the economic growth of Edmonton.

### Membership

Membership in the Association required the approval of the board of directors and the general membership. Members were divided into two general classes. The first was for owners or officers of a corporation engaged in the sale of real estate. The second class was for salesmen of those firms that were members of the Association.

In addition to these two classes of membership, the constitution also required all members to sign a personal pledge. Fines and expulsion from the Association would result if members did not comply with the bylaws or code of ethics, or for: "any conduct which [tended] to cause discredit to fall upon the Association or upon the real estate business as a whole."

The privileges and obligations of individual members included reporting to the board of directors in writing any breaches made by members. Such reports were "deemed a privileged communication and [did] not subject the member making such a report to liability." Upon the receipt of a complaint the board of directors was required to advise the member of the complaint, provide the member with a copy of the letter, and start an investigation.

Membership fees and dues were arranged according to the membership structure. The first member representing an office was required to pay \$10. Each additional member of that firm including salesmen paid \$5 each.

The owners or employees of companies that were members of the Association were responsible for the actions of that company unless they could show: "to the satisfaction of the Board of Directors that such violation was without his or their knowledge or consent."

The Association was governed by an eight-member board of directors. A nominating committee (appointed at least two weeks before the annual meeting) arranged elections of officers and directors. The officers were authorized to hire an executive secretary and any: "such other persons as may be necessary to properly conduct the activities of the Association."

The Association was not large or active enough to justify the hiring of a full-time executive secretary until the late 1950s.

At certain times the office of secretary and treasurer were combined. Secretarial duties were, therefore, handled by Association members who were paid a small honorarium for performing these tasks.

### *Standing committees*

The constitution also established a system of standing committees that would help to achieve the Association's various objectives. The evolution of this system is a major part of the Edmonton Real Estate Board's administrative history from 1927 to 1995. The standing committees in 1927 were Appraisal; Arbitration; Membership; Program; Legislative; and Publicity. The only committee not carried forward from 1909 was Finance.

Helping members when problems arose in making an appraisal and replying to requests to the Association for appraisals from an outside body was the responsibility of the Appraisal Committee.

Adjudicated complaints or differences between members was the responsibility of the Arbitration Committee. The committee only heard cases when the parties involved had agreed in writing to abide by its findings without recourse to any other tribunal, and to pay all costs of the proceedings. The

committee functioned in a semi-judicial fashion by obtaining statements under oath from the principals and witnesses. The secretary of the Association gave a written reply within forty-eight hours of the committee's decision. A copy was signed by the deciding members and the seal of the Board attached by the secretary. The committee was required to keep a record of each dispute, the decisions made, and the grounds for the decisions.

The task of building up the membership, maintaining the interest of the members, and having members attend all the meetings was the task of two committees, namely the Membership and Program committees. The Program Committee provided the programs for the meetings that were: "for the best interest and welfare of the Association." Publicizing the activities of the Association was the responsibility of another committee. The Publicity Committee also sought new members.

The Legislative Committee was to: "guard and promote the interests of real estate before all legislative bodies whether civic or provincial. . . ." This committee was thus responsible for reviewing new legislation and suggesting changes to existing statutes.

### *Code of Ethics*

The constitution of the National Real Estate Association provided the code of ethics for the new association. Its comprehensive rules of conduct dealt with an individual broker's relationship with fellow brokers, clients, customers, and the public.

The Edmonton Real Estate Association was designed to do more than encourage integrity and full disclosure amongst members of the real estate industry. It encouraged the self-regulation of the industry, cooperation between brokers, efficient office practices, and education.

### *The Association in operation*

By May 1927, the necessary steps had been taken to organize the Edmonton Real Estate Association. The first general meeting was held on May 16, 1927. Joseph Mothersill's presentation stressed the pitfalls of new

organizations and a few of the things a real estate association might do. John Blue, secretary of the Edmonton Board of Trade, discussed the value of an organization among the members of any profession or business and also the need for immigrants to Alberta. Musical presentations were also part of the program.

The Membership, Program, Publicity, and Legislative committees were most active between 1927 and 1938. In June 1927, the Publicity Committee informed local newspapers of the proceedings of the Association. The *Edmonton Journal* and the *Edmonton Bulletin* showed no interest since virtually no press coverage of the Association's activities is evident before the 1950s.

In July 1928, the Association launched its first membership drive. Both Sid Lawrie and Luke Winterburn joined as a result of this effort. Their contributions would include serving as presidents of the Association.

The problems of decreasing membership and low attendance at the meetings became acute during the 1930s. Fees were dropped to as low as \$1. In 1935 the Association considered joining the real estate section of the Chamber of Commerce. One reason suggested in support of the idea was that a delegation from the real estate section would have more impact on governments than the Edmonton Real Estate Association would. Frank Lorimer, however, objected to the way the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce was run. He said: "that all they had done was to get a person's membership, arrange for a few speakers, invite the entire membership and that was practically all there was to do."

### *The Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act*

The Legislative Committee worked to bring about legislation on the licensing of real estate agents. Legislation relating to the industry before 1929 included "The Land Titles Act" and "The Real Estate Commission Act," both passed in 1906.

The first effort to bring in additional legislation was initiated by the Calgary Real Estate Board. In 1919 it proposed a law requiring real estate brokers to be licensed. To obtain this license, the names of ten residents

in the locality of the proposed business were required along with a bond and a license fee of \$100. Ten dollars was charged for each salesman working under the license. According to Edmund Taylor, the legislation was needed because of the operations of unqualified or unscrupulous people who discredited the industry.

This initiative prompted a conference in Calgary on December 12, 1919, of real estate men in the province, including representatives from Edmonton. The meeting produced a number of revisions to meet the concerns of other real estate agents in the province. However, while there was strong support from the industry, no legislation came about.

By March 21, 1927, a draft copy of the legislation was approved for presentation to Premier Brownlee and Attorney General John Lymburn. The provincial government provided further encouragement when on June 6, 1927, Lymburn made a presentation to the Association. Henry Brace, the superintendent of insurance, also met with the Association to suggest revisions.

The draft bill was introduced into the Alberta Legislature on February 3 and debate began on February 16. The draft bill required all real estate agents to be bonded in the sum of \$1,000. It also outlined a fee schedule based on the size of the town in which the transaction took place. The fee was \$10 in towns and cities of 5,000 or more; \$7.50 in towns or cities of less than 5,000, and \$3 elsewhere in the province. The license fee for a real estate salesman was set at \$3, and \$1 was to be charged if the license had to be amended or reinstated.

Considerable opposition to the bill arose because trust companies and lawyers were exempt from paying the bond required from full-time real estate agents. Archie Matheson – the member for Vegreville – led the attack on this provision of the draft bill. He was supported by Gordon Foster, the member for Hand Hills, and P. Christophers, the member for Rocky Mountain House. Both appeared to have a deep-rooted antipathy towards the legal profession. Christophers expressed the view that "while he was not familiar with lawyers he knew enough to keep out of their clutches."

This criticism of lawyers brought Liberal leader Joe Shaw and Attorney General John Lymburn to their defence. Shaw pointed out that: "no matter how much a limited number of

*lawyers may have erred in the past, that one swallow does not make a summer, and that lawyers breaking the law had no special privileges when they came before the law.*" Attorney General John Lymburn also defended the business morality of lawyers, indicating that it was as high, if not higher, as in any other business, including farming.

Following the debate on the morality of lawyers, the House resumed its debate on the bill. In the end, trust companies could engage in the real estate business without payment of the bond but members of the law society were barred from business of this nature. Foster and Matheson also tried to change the amount of the bond from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and then to \$2,000 but both amendments were defeated.

Further debate took place on March 19, when Lorne Proudfoot, the member from Acadia, raised other objections. His criticism, reported in the *Edmonton Bulletin*, was that

*legislation of this type especially in rural districts where people were acquainted one with another, was superfluous. To the best of his knowledge there had been no demand for such legislation.*

*If the government desired these fees for a source of revenue let that declaration be made without fear or favour. He thought this was not the best method of protecting people from being beaten out of their money.*

*He submitted farmers might just as well be licensed so that they wouldn't put all the large potatoes on the top of the sack or water their milk. The whole trend of legislation of this type was becoming ridiculous. In addition it would work a hardship on the small man whose turn over was limited.*

Proudfoot's suggestion that bonding be reduced or eliminated altogether was favourably received. Passage of the bill thus became dependent on resolving the issue of bonding.

With the passage of the bill in jeopardy, the Edmonton Real Estate Association considered revisions to their original draft and intensified their lobbying efforts in support of this legislation in anticipation of its resubmission in 1929. On April 2, 1928, John MacIntosh suggested that a petition signed by a representative body of real estate men might

have some influence with them. Requesting support from local Boards of Trade was also suggested. In August the Edmonton Real Estate Association also launched a fund-raising effort. Edmonton and Calgary were expected to contribute \$3,000 each, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat to contribute \$100 each, and all other towns to contribute \$50 each. It is not known if they reached their target.

Despite considerable support for keeping the bonding provisions and financial donations from such organizations as the Alberta Real Estate Association, the Edmonton Real Estate Association changed its views on the bonding issue. With the elimination of the bonding provision, the bill was passed in the 1929 sitting. It received royal assent by March 20.

This bill was significant because it was the first step by the government to require persons to furnish some assurance of their qualifications to act as real estate agents. The Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act included definitions of a real estate agent and a salesman, of a superintendent as a regulatory authority, as well as licensing requirements, grounds for suspension or cancellation, contravention, penalties, and fees.

After the passage of the bill, the Edmonton Real Estate Association continued to consider improvements. At the executive meeting on December 30, 1929, it was suggested that the Real Estate Act be amended to make it an offence to pay a commission to anyone other than a licensed agent and that all agents must furnish a bond. These and other suggestions were forwarded to the Legislative Committee for action.

The Edmonton Real Estate Association also worked closely with the administrator of the act, Henry Brace, to ensure its enforcement.

Matthew A. Hammond was one individual whose conduct concerned the Association. At the October 21, 1929, meeting, Messrs. Hake and Winterburn complained that he loitered outside their office and solicited their customers. It was decided that the president would interview Brace to see if there was any remedy against such tactics. The president later reported that an inspector had cautioned Hammond, who had promised not to repeat the offence. Brace also said that if Hammond could be convicted under any city bylaw Brace would not hesitate to cancel his license.

Other issues dealt with by special committees created by the Association through

to 1939 included the development of a standardized commissions schedule and standardized forms. In the fall of 1927, work began on revising the interim contract form, standard listing form, and the offer-to-purchase form.

### *Community involvement*

Town planning was a community issue of interest to the Association during 1927 to 1938. The Association continued work on comprehensive policies and on the development of specific areas in the city. In August 1927, for example, City Council asked the Association to be a member of a town planning and zoning committee. It consisted of aldermen and representatives from various public organizations who acted as advisors to the City Council on these issues.

When the Town Planning Commission was established in 1929 the Association played a more permanent role. The Commission was authorized to prepare a major street plan and a zoning bylaw, which was completed in 1933. H. Milton Martin served as chairman of the Commission during this period. The tradition of Board involvement on this Commission was carried on by Luke Winterburn. Sid Lawrie was the Board's representative on the Zoning Appeal Board.

The Association also became involved in the ongoing issue of Edmonton's civic centre development, which had been shelved because of the high land costs. At the October 17, 1927, meeting, Alderman Gibbs discussed the objectives of the Town Planning Committee and "*invited the fullest co-operation of the Association in their deliberation.*" He also reviewed the history of the civic centre plans and showed maps on the proposed lay-out and the small amount of property to be acquired. After his presentation, a committee was appointed to interview those private land owners who were holding out for a price considered above its real value. These meetings — if they took place — had no effect on the civic centre development at that time.

In November 1929, John Yule, the Association's secretary, drew attention to the

lack of street number signs and posts. In his letter to the city, John Yule noted that the

*"absence of these signs, apart from being an inconvenience to the citizens gives the city a neglected appearance and causes strangers to form a bad impression."*

By 1939, the effects of the Depression on the Edmonton real estate market were less evident. In his president's report for 1938-39, Sam Ferris reported that

*there appears to be no doubt that the real estate market has greatly improved during the past year. Many more sales of house properties have been made, and there are indications of business properties becoming more active on the market. Rentals remain steady at practically the same standard of value that they were a year ago.*

*There is the same shortage of housing spaces as well as certain types of space for business purposes.*

Ferris also noted with satisfaction that the present war had not injured the market. He also thought that people were "*becoming more real estate minded all the time, and are taking a renewed interest in this form of investment.*"

The creation of the Edmonton Real Estate Association in 1927 established the two-tiered membership system, which would remain unchanged until 1995. The creation of this organization reflected the prosperity of the late 1920s. The Association initiated the first cooperation between the Edmonton real estate community and the provincial government. The Real Estate Agents' Licensing Act and its subsequent revisions provided the legislative framework for the industry until the passage of the Real Estate Act in 1995.

The high hopes of 1927 were tested during the Depression. Unlike most real estate associations from this era, the Edmonton Real Estate Association was able to survive through the dedication of a small group of members. The Association and its members were thus able to provide leadership to the industry when better economic times returned beginning with World War Two.