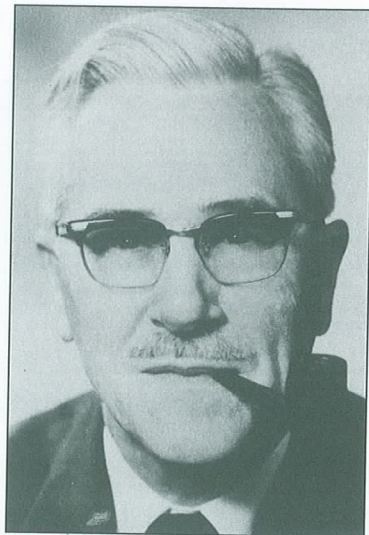


CHAPTER TWO
**The
Birth
of a
Notion**

The focus of the phoenix-like Calgary Real Estate Board was the apparent need for a single strong voice that could be heard as far away as Ottawa, concerning the real estate profession's involvement in the plight of land-seeking veterans returning from armed forces service in World War II. These men and women, once more in the civilian lifestream, found their peacetime dreams to be more of a nightmare. Their concerns, as potential real estate clients, included, for example, the complexity and restrictions of the federal government's veterans' allowances, the legacy of limitations having been created by wartime prices and trade legislation, rent control legislation, and the terms under which ex-service men and women could become part of the agricultural and landholding segments of our post-war population.

In 1943, the Calgary Real Estate Board began speaking in concert with its Edmonton counterpart and other such boards across Canada, and the newly-formed Canadian Association of Real Estate Boards, (CAREB). Among its loudest voices were those of Calgarians Clare J. Cote Sr., who had been our local board's first president during its "earlier life", and Kennett Lyle, in creating that national body. The Calgary Real Estate Board, as an organization, also was a staunch supporter of CAREB too, having joined it early in its lifetime at a cost of \$2.00 per member, which meant an annual outlay of \$32.00 - a major expense for an organization whose bankroll totalled \$46.82! In fact, in those years of the early '40's, officers of local real estate boards as well as real estate salespeople in areas which, up to then,

Kennett I. Lyle.



AREA Convention, Oct 3, 1947.

did not have local or regional groups, began very useful dialogues on many real estate matters of common concern. The U.S.A.'s National Association of Real Estate Boards, a well-established country-wide organization also was a willing and knowledgeable participant in the dialogues.

Out of those exchanges of ideas, goals, and experiences, as well as the fellowship arising from the newly-established provincial licensing of real estate salespeople, emerged the Alberta Real Estate Association, (A.R.E.A.). That group made it possible for the the growing family of local real estate bodies to inaugurate knowledgeable discussions with our Alberta government of their province-wide concerns. For example, they wanted to conduct the primary

policing of their own profession. That would enable them to make their own decisions and take constructive action with regard to creating a pattern of behavior within their own ranks, a pattern which would include the licensing and bonding of salespersons.

By 1948, local real estate experts were even more deeply and personally involved with the provincial and national groups. Kennett Lyle was elected president of the Canadian Association of Real Estate Boards. Among the officers of the provincial board were Edmonton realtors, Jack Weber and Stan Melton, who soon would qualify for licenses to open their firms' offices in Calgary, an expansion which, in both cases, turned out to be highly successful. During that first post-war decade the pattern of the real estate profession's activities underwent some significant changes. Many Alberta men and women of rural birth and upbringing who had served overseas and in other parts of Canada had seen, during off-duty hours, "how the other half lives." They became the nucleus of a large migration to urban life that spawned a widespread need for city housing. Women, having shouldered new responsibilities and discovered new occupational opportunities, began joining the ranks of real estate salespeople.

Because of the financial and economic drain created by half a dozen years of war, Calgary, as the 1940's moved along, found itself in dire need of additional housing. The city's population had grown by about 20,000 and all levels of government pounced on the cliché outlook that more people automatically

created a need for a louder administrative voice and an increased measure of control.

The corps of real estate salespeople felt somewhat the same way, believing they were deserving of a larger share in the administration of their profession. Talk grew of their wish and their need to unionize in order to develop a more highly audible voice in planning the directions and exercising options open to them in enhancing their livelihood.

The bulk of Alberta Real Estate Association work was based in Calgary. Torontonian Frank Johns, following a six-year wartime airforce career, had moved to Calgary with the Lyle brothers' real estate firm. His proven abilities in the skills of shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping qualified him as the obvious candidate for the group's secretarial job. One of his first tasks was to help the salespeople form a union. All were paid commission only and had no assurance of continuity or stability of income even though many of them owned and operated their own small companies.

Johns arranged a meeting of company salespeople in the Manning Eggleston Lumber Company boardroom at which he helped them organize so that they could speak with a single voice. He also helped increase their clout by arranging that an annual membership fee of \$15.00 also made a salesperson a member of the provincial and the national bodies. However, the profession continued to suffer from a great deal of disorganized rivalry in the sales field. Evidence of its standing in the participants' list of

CALGARY HERALD

CALGARY, ALBERTA, MONDAY, SEPT. 9, 1946

Calgary Man Heads Real Estate Ass'n

Alberta Agents Ask New Licence Ruling; Would Admit Only 'Experienced' Salesmen

Kennett I. Lyle was elected president of the Alberta Real Estate Association organized at Red Deer Saturday by a large number of licenced real estate agents and salesmen from all sections of the province.

Other officers are: Andrew Whyte, Edmonton, honorary president; W. J. Botterill, Red Deer, vice-president; Lew Weber, Edmonton, vice-president; Howard Kelly, Calgary, secretary-treasurer. Directors: Mark Cummings, Edmonton; Arnold Burn, Calgary; Frank L. Watt, High River; Samuel Ferris, Edmonton.

Objects of the organization are as follows: To assist in deciding legislation affecting real estate; to raise and unify the standard of the real estate profession; to promote acquaintanceship and goodwill among the real estate brokers of the province; to sponsor fair dealing in real estate transactions; to acquaint the public with the prevailing ethics of the real estate profession, and to increase confidence and security for the investor in urban and rural real estate in their transactions with bona fide brokers.

CONTROL LICENCES

A resolution was passed asking that the Provincial Real Estate Licencing Act be altered so that no real estate agent's licence can be issued excepting to a person previously licensed as a real estate agent, or one who has served at least one year as a licensed real estate salesman.

The delegates were of the opinion, in passing the resolution, that the public should have protection against the dangers arising from an inexperienced agent newly licensed in handling trust monies as deposits, and in the matter of the initial basis of agreement between buyer and seller.

The legal phase of a transaction is usually handled by a member of the law profession but many a deal might become unnecessarily involved and complicated through an inexperienced agent before a lawyer's services would be called upon.

In accepting the office of president, Mr. Lyle stated that he regretted that Andrew Whyte, regional vice-president of the Canadian Association of Real Estate Boards was not in a position to accept the office himself.



KENNETT LYLE
... named president

Scholarship Winners Named

A list of recipients of scholarships, bursaries and awards from the University of Alberta has been issued from the office of the registrar at the university. Ordinarily announced at the spring convocation, they were deferred this year because of the special January session which did not close until July 31.

Following are the Southern Alberta winners:

Viscount Bonnett matriculation scholarship—Dorothy M. Haybus, Dalton, C. MacWilliams and Albert Okazaki, all of Calgary.

Friends of the University bursaries—Eileen E. M. Keyte, Calgary, arts and science; William Hall Lakey, Medicine Hat, and Clark Thomas Leavitt, Glenwood, matriculation; Mervyn Stanley Devonshire, Calgary, commerce.

Dan Baker scholarships—Don Ewert Berg, Millmont; Stanley I. Pethybridge, Calgary.

McLean bursaries—Stewart C. Dethlefsen, Calgary.

priorities was apparent in the agenda of an October, 1950 gathering in Calgary of the national and provincial real estate associations. The purposes of the gathering were listed as education, public relations, legislation, good fellowship, entertainment. The lack of pattern and direction was a sore point in the opinion of Calgary board of director member Kennett Lyle. He and his fellow directors were valiantly trying to build the prestige of the Calgary Real Estate Board as an enticement to Realtors (that occupational term was officially adopted that year) to join and strengthen the organization. But haphazard marketing at reduced commissions, too often coupled with extravagant and frequently irresponsible newspaper advertising, continued to gnaw away at the public's confidence and the professionals' credibility.

Lyle felt the behavior of many Realtors damaged themselves and their colleagues by unwittingly tempting civic administrators to use the licensing of real estate salespeople as a money-maker. As he pointed out, for years municipalities required agents and salesmen to buy local licenses when trading in their area, and Realtors were no exception. To get a license to do business in, say, Bowness or Forest Lawn, or any other outlying district, the Realtor had to stand in line along with those buying dog and bicycle licenses.

In addition to curbing that expense, the matter of trying to bring order into the marketplace was another serious matter. Subsequently a group of fourteen real estate agents chaired by Dick L.

Richards, a director of the Calgary Real Estate Board, met in Red Deer on February 7, 1951 and created the Calgary Co-op Listing Bureau. It was off to a wobbly start under the leadership of a succession of paid administrators who appeared to bring to the post, only mediocre capabilities.

By 1953, the organization's 35 agent members adopted their own standardized "For Sale" sign because the idea of Co-op listing, which was not acceptable to Realtors in other Canadian cities, appeared to be taking hold here. Certainly it was developing, albeit at a snail's pace, with the blessing of the Calgary Real Estate Board's executive and 130 members, not all of whom were full-time Realtors; a fact which constituted another measure of concern. Board executive member Ivan C. Robison was disturbed by the number of salespersons to whom real estate selling was more of a spare-time hobby than a full-time occupation. It was a matter that C.R.E.B. wrestled with, off and on, for a decade. That span of years included the very lively year of 1954 when W. Frank Johns was board president while, for a short time, retaining his position as secretary of the Calgary Co-op Listing Bureau that had emerged from the salesmen's organization he had founded.

This sort of group building job was right up Frank John's alley, he having advanced through the real estate ranks from salesman to president of the Calgary Real Estate Board. The profession was mushrooming too, for by that time there were more sales people on the local board than company

owners, a situation that created some shifts in the balance of authority and viewpoints within the board.

That was a time of growing pains and also of financial troubles. Obviously the time had come for the intertwined Calgary Real Estate Board and the Calgary Co-op Listing Bureau to celebrate a legal marriage. That took place on November 18, 1955. Several legitimate offspring emerged from that physical and philosophical union. Graduates of the three-year-old Co-op-sponsored salesmen's course helped erase the cut-throat newspaper advertising war; C.R.E.B. membership for part-time salespeople was outlawed; and the Calgary Real Estate Co-operative Limited (to give it an official and complete name) bought its own office property in downtown Calgary.

The Calgary Real Estate Board - one of its early offices - circa 1948/50.



The outlay for that building and its subsequent renovation and enlargement, was undertaken not a moment too soon because the group had launched a host of long overdue projects. They included the appointment of committees to deal with such specialized activities as: House, Co-op, Finance and Budget, Education, Arbitration, Member Qualification, Commission Schedule & Standard Forms, Programs, Attendance & Reception, Guaranteed Sales & Trade-Ins, and Pension Plan. There were indicators too, of C.R.E.B.'s growing involvement with the community through committees dealing with City Zoning By-Laws, Corporations, Trust Companies, Public Relations & Advertising, and Sale of Property to the City of Calgary.

This list of some of the major fields of interest and activity revealed the extent to which the butterfly C.R.E.B. was emerging from its moth-like cocoon to become a colorful, innovative, and dominant feature on Calgary's landscape.