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CREATING SUBDIVISIONS: THE LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM
IN KINGSTON, ONTARIO: 1950 - 1962

BY

ROBERT A. MCGEACHY

Thesis submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment for the
M.A. degree in History

UNIVERSITE D'OTTAWA/UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA



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ABSTRACT
CREATING SUBDIVISIONS: THE LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM
IN KINGSTON, ONTARIO: 1950-1962

Robert A. McGeachy,
University of Ottawa, 1990

Supervisor:
Professor Michael Behiels

In Kingston, Ontario between 1950 and 1962, the land assembly program, which involved all three levels of the Canadian Federal system, generated nearly six hundred fully serviced lots arranged in two subdivisions named Polson Park and Calvin Park. These lots were priced specifically for the middle income market. Meanwhile, the public housing program, which also involved all three levels of the Canadian Federal system, built only seventy-one low cost rental units. This total must be considered insufficient when compared to the overall demand for affordable housing.

This thesis uses a case study approach to examine the dynamics, at the local level, behind the intergovernmental land assembly program. The first chapter, defines terms, examines various theoretical perspectives and provides a cross - cultural comparison between of the housing policies of Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. The succeeding chapters focus on the formation of the program at the upper echelons of the federal and provincial bureaucracies, two aborted land assembly projects in Kingston and the two successful projects.

The land assembly program was very much a reflection of the Canadian socio-economic and political attitudes of the 1950's.

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In Kingston, Ontario, between 1950 and 1962, the land assembly program, which involved all three levels of the Canadian federal system, generated nearly six hundred fully serviced lots arranged in two subdivisions named Polson Park and Calvin Park. These lots were priced specifically for the middle income homebuying market which represented approximately twenty percent of the local population.¹ At the same time, the public housing program, which also involved all levels of the Canadian federal system, built seventy-one low cost rental housing units. This total must be considered insufficient when compared to the overall demand for affordable housing.² This distribution of opportunities to acquire lots was representative of the attitudes and priorities of the state and those prominent citizens capable of influencing the state during the 1950's. Namely, they believed that the members of the middle income group, who earned between \$5,000 and \$7,000, contributed a heavy portion of the country's tax dollars and felt that they should receive a correspondingly large proportion of the benefits.³

The land assembly program was a form of elite accommodation because the three levels of the Canadian federal system helped furnish homes for a select portion of the population. Those citizens incapable of reaching the middle income market were excluded from the program's benefits. This tendency was not restricted to the housing field and was indicative of the state's

inclination to aid the more fortunate members of society.⁴ In short, government intervention did not necessarily benefit the poor. This thesis is an examination of the socio-economic and political dynamics behind an intergovernmental program formed at the upper echelons of the federal and provincial bureaucracies and implemented at the municipal level.

1.2. THE LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM

In 1949, the Federal Minister of Reconstruction, Robert Winters, outlined the intergovernmental land assembly program. According to the venture's procedures, the federal and provincial governments formed a capital cost sharing arrangement which purchased a tract of land and planned an infrastructure for a new subdivision. The infrastructure included roads, sewers, and other essential services. When this capital and labor intensive task was completed, the authorities sold off lots to individual and/or corporate buyers. Each project's costs and potential profits were divided on a 75\25 per cent basis with the dominion government covering the larger share.⁵

The land assembly program took place during the 1950's which was a formative decade in Canadian urban history. Canada's steadily growing metropolitan areas created an almost insatiable demand for housing and challenged the construction industry's ability to cope. People from all walks of life had aspirations to attain the badge of middle income respectability, a single detached house.⁶ At the start of the decade, the building trades, a major employer of men and material, was dominated by diminutive and

fragile firms. Because the private firms were experiencing difficulties meeting the demands for housing during this period, governments were forced to intervene in the economy to provide housing and to manage the growing urban sprawl.⁷ By the decade's end, large and powerful building conglomerates began emerging as the weaker firms consolidated.⁸

The program was to serve socio-economic purposes by providing well-built housing and generating jobs in the construction trades, one of the nation's most capital and labor intensive industries. Traditionally, Canadian governments relied upon the free market system to provide the country's housing stock and had been reluctant to implement a social housing program which could accommodate tenants incapable of purchasing a home.⁹ The basic framework of Canada's post-war milieu, of which the federal housing policy was a vital component, was established during this period.

While the land assembly program was established in the upper echelons of the federal and provincial bureaucracies, it was set in motion at the municipal level. For example, agreement from all three governments was required before any aspect of a land assembly project, including the price of lots, could be implemented.¹⁰ For that reason, the entire process was sensitive to the impulses of socially and politically prominent citizens in the local area, namely the commercial-civic elite.

1.3. COMMERCIAL-CIVIC ELITE

In Kingston, as in other cities throughout Canada and elsewhere, the local social and political processes were dominated

by the commercial-civic elite. This group was composed of the large merchants, real estate agents, insurance brokers, bankers, and contractors. A variety of other persons associated with commercial enterprises or who agreed substantially with business middle class interests, including attorneys, journalists, physicians, educators, and clergymen were included in this group.¹¹ Multi-national corporations, such as the Alcan branch plant in Kingston, that could be termed dominant economic elite, generally did not concern themselves with local affairs. Therefore, this elite can not be classified as commercial-civic.¹²

By no means was the commercial-civic elite a monolithic group free from conflicts. Instead, a common set of values and attitudes drew the individual actors together into a loose coalition.¹³ One belief, expounded by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, was that the government's role was to create an environment favorable to individual choice and profit within a free market system.¹⁴ Another was that boosterism was more than mere jingoism, it was an attitude favoring the vitality of growth.¹⁵ During the 1950's, Kingston's commercial-civic elite was compelled to try and expand the city's commercial and industrial base. The local economy was threatened by an growing Kingston Township and by the potential loss of waterfront industries because of the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway.¹⁶ The land assembly program was conducive to this strategy because it generated middle income housing fit for middle managers, professors, skilled tradesmen and whoever was capable of meeting the purchase prices. Ideally, an industry or business

with well-paying positions would choose Kingston because it had acceptable amenities, such as housing for its employees. The industry or business, in turn, would contribute valuable tax revenues to the city's weakened tax base.¹⁷

The commercial-civic elite's strategy was a realistic response to the local economy's critical condition. However, it had some drawbacks. The group's conception of membership in the community was restricted to those capable of participating in the political process. The skilled and unionized workforce, whose viewpoints on issues such as housing were similar to those of the commercial-civic elite, contributed members to city council.¹⁸ During the 1950's, property restrictions excluded a large proportion of the local population from running as candidates or even voting in city elections.¹⁹ These disfranchised individuals did not receive the same benefits from the political process as did enfranchised members. For instance, the commercial-civic elite did not regard publicly produced housing for low income housing to be a priority. Members of the various levels of government held similar attitudes. As a result, there was a dearth of public housing during the 1950's for working class tenants.

Canada's housing policy did not develop in a vacuum devoid of external influences. When the dominion government decided to begin intervening extensively into the housing market after the Second World War, its officials had the opportunity to observe and learn from the nearly half a century of British housing experience and decade of American experience.²⁰ The Central Mortgage and Housing

Corporation (CMHC) was formed in 1946 and was the federal government's agent in the housing field. Many of the crown corporation's original members were recruited in Great Britain and brought their planning and housing ideas with them when they came to Canada.²¹ Prime Minister Richard Bennett's 1935 Dominion Housing Act closely resembled the housing legislation then being implemented by American President Franklin Roosevelt.²² At the local level, Canadian municipal governmental structures have traditionally closely resembled those found in the United States.²³ As well, Canada's overall housing policy's progress followed a general pattern which had also occurred in the other countries. Brief comparative examinations of British and American housing practises provide insights into Canada's initiatives.

1.4.1. AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Because of the absence of a comprehensive program, Canada, during the 1950's, occupied the first stage of British writer D. V. Donnison's three stage model that depicted the evolving relation between the state and housing. At the lowest stage, the state benefited only middle income homeowners. At the next stage, the state implemented a substantial public housing program for those unable to purchase a home. Canada reached this stage when it finally entered the social housing field during the 1960's. For instance, the Ontario Housing Corporation, created in 1964, became one of the largest landlords in the non-Communist world. Finally, there was the socialist model where the state completely controlled the nation's housing stock. It is unlikely that Canadians will

ever seek to reach this stage.²⁴ Great Britain and the United States followed similar routes when their respective governments developed their housing policies.

As in many other legal, social, and political practises, Great Britain and the United States have influenced Canada's housing and city planning processes. For instance, British emigrant Thomas Adams was the first city planner of consequence to work in this country before he moved to New York City during the 1920's.²⁵ Accordingly, using the British and American systems, circa 1900 to the early 1960's as comparative reference points can shed light on the Canadian housing policies and practises.

1.4.2. GREAT BRITAIN'S HOUSING POLICY

In Great Britain the state has played a far more substantive role in the housing field than in Canada or in the United States.²⁶ Social class and local governments have been more critical factors in determining the public housing output's characteristics and volume than in the two North American countries.

Traditionally in British politics, a person's party affiliation was determined almost exclusively by his class status. The working class, in general, and trade unions, in particular, have furnished the Labour Party with the bulk of its membership throughout the years. An occasionally unwieldy alliance of urban business interests and rich rural landowners has customarily been the backbone of the Conservative Party.²⁷ Since the early part of this century, when the Labour Party began running candidates in municipal elections, partisan politics have been prominent at the

local and national level.²⁸ In Britain's unitary state, City Councils' have been pillars of the British social welfare system and their responsibilities have included housing and education. Displeasure with the central government has frequently been translated into the election of City Councillors of opposing parties.²⁹

The two major parties' attitudes towards housing and land management has diverged. The Labour Party has generally advocated a strong state involvement in the economy and housing marketplace.³⁰ Private home ownership and free enterprise has conventionally been the bedrock of the Tory housing policies.³¹ During the twentieth century, British state housing policies have oscillated between these conceptions.

1.4.3. "HOMES FIT FOR HEROES"

The threat of a Bolshevik insurrection simmered in Great Britain as several hundred thousand bitter fighting men returned home at the end of the First World War. Lloyd George's coalition government sought to appease the soldiers with its 1919, "Homes Fit For Heroes" scheme which promised to deliver half a million sturdy rental dwellings, in three years, which were modelled on middle income houses.³² The government did not fulfil this quota because of fiscal restraints and the labor movement's declining potency during an economic slump.³³ After taking office in 1923, S. Baldwin's Tories diminished the quality and quantity of the units and eventually phased out the program.³⁴ Despite its somewhat inglorious end, the venture served as a benchmark for subsequent

social housing strategies.

1.4.4. HOUSING SEGREGATION AND THE EMERGING MIDDLE CLASS

The separation between fashionable middle and upper class districts and the grimy working class quarters has been characteristic of British cities since the industrial revolution.³⁵ During the early part of the twentieth century, improved transportation stimulated the growth of middle class suburbs which ringed urban areas.³⁶ Residence in these areas was a badge of status and a symbol of financial accomplishment. Between the World Wars, British society experienced several significant developments. Civil servants, professors, scientists and other similar professions were now included in the middle class which had been the preserve of wealthy merchants during Victorian and Edwardian times.³⁷ The Conservative Party responded to this sociological evolution by introducing effective measures that stimulated homeownership.³⁸ By 1938, nearly a quarter of the population owned its own home which was an unprecedented proportion.³⁹ Meanwhile, the new entrants to the middle class sought to escape the confines of the city and move to the prestigious suburbs. Likewise, there was a steady migration from the old northern industrial centers to the more prosperous southern metropolis.⁴⁰ These trends, which became stronger in the post-World War II era, reinforced the cleavage between the less prosperous urban areas and the flourishing suburbs

1.4.5. POST-WORLD WAR II

The British government faced onerous challenges at the

conclusion of the Second World War. German bombing raids had destroyed or severely damaged a substantial portion of the nation's housing stock in major urban centers. The curtailment of residential housing production during the hostilities only exacerbated the predicament.⁴¹ During the 1945 election, voters feared the onset of a depression and reacted by defeating Winston Churchill's Tories and electing C. R. Attlee's Labour Party.⁴² The new administration increased the role of the state in the housing field. For instance, the 1947 Housing Act enabled local authorities to provide rental housing for middle class as well as low income tenants.⁴³ Nevertheless, the government was not operating in a vacuum without any external restraints. The massive war effort had nearly emptied British coffers and forced the government to rely on American loans. The Labour Party was forced to curtail some of its more socialist initiatives to maintain favor with its laissez-faire orientated creditors.⁴⁴

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act was Attlee's ambitious, but ill-conceived, attempt to regulate the sprawl afflicting the margins of British cities. It was an indecisive bid to nationalize available land, yet it allowed the speculative market to operate, albeit with a weighty tax that left private developers few incentives.⁴⁵ In other words, the act was a compromise between the moderate and radical wings of the Labour Party. Neither one of these groups were satisfied by its composition or results.⁴⁶

Indeed, the 1947 Act helped control urban sprawl, but at an exacting cost. The added planning controls pushed up land costs.

In turn, expensive houses or high-density, frequently poor quality, residential buildings were constructed on the available land.⁴⁷ Local authorities became reluctant to weaken their tax base by diluting commercial or industrial areas with housing. As a result, suburbs became exclusively residential areas and the rift between the dirty cities and comfortable outlying boroughs increased.⁴⁸ Lastly, England's true elites, the rich rural and often aristocratic landowners were able to use their reserves and block development projects in choice areas. Moderate income homebuyers were left with overcrowded neighborhoods.⁴⁹

The Tories' 1951 to 1964 term did not reverse these trends. In fact, their efforts to free up the housing market succeeded in inflating property prices and alienated local authorities.⁵⁰ Similarly, their attempts to remove rent controls and liquidate council housing resulted in hardships for many tenants and inappropriate liaisons between some Conservative politicians and unscrupulous speculators.⁵¹

Overall, housing conditions in Great Britain improved during the 1950's. The size of the private rental sector shrunk as more people could afford their own homes.⁵² A comprehensive public housing program enabled a substantial portion of the population to attain reasonable shelter.⁵³ Nevertheless, inequalities still pervaded in the British society. By 1964, nearly three million British citizens lived in slum conditions nationwide, many of whom had been displaced by middle income homeowners.⁵⁴ Even with extensive state participation in the housing market, not all

citizens could benefit fully from available assistance.

1.5.1. UNITED STATES: MULTI-GOVERNMENTAL DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination along racial and class lines has permeated the American political and economic system because of its democratic traditions. Housing policy has been formulated at the national level. However, scores of local governmental entities, each jealously guarding its autonomy and taxing privileges, have played significant roles in its implementation.⁵⁴ The numerous local jurisdictions were to ensure that all citizens were represented in governmental decisions affecting their lives; in effect, municipal governments were to be protectors of participatory democracy.⁵⁵ In reality, only those citizens who could afford to purchase a home were guaranteed adequate representation.

1.5.2. FORMULATING A HOUSING POLICY

The federal government made only nominal commitments towards formulating a social housing policy before the Great Depression. The industrial expansion during the First World War prompted Washington to set in motion a short term program for East Coast shipyard workers. When the emergency subsided, so did the venture.⁵⁶ The American labor force, which was mostly disorganized, was unable to pressure the federal government into maintaining a long term program.⁵⁷ Only another crisis prompted further action.

Thousands of families lost their homes and savings during the Great Depression. In the wake of this calamity, President Franklin Roosevelt established the influential Federal Housing

Administration (FHA) in 1935. The FHA did not directly lend money to potential homeowners. It ensured that sufficient capital was available by providing lenders with safeguards and insurance. In return, lenders could only grant mortgages to borrowers who met FHA standards.⁵⁸ In a perceived need to protect property values, the FHA granted permission almost exclusively to White neighborhoods.⁵⁹ One outgrowth of this policy was the proliferation of segregated White neighborhoods.⁶⁰ This split between the affluent suburbs and impoverished central cities only widened in the post-world war era.

Substantial portions of the American population migrated throughout the country during and after the Second World War. Massive numbers of African-Americans trekked northwards to escape Southern racism and to find employment in the industrial centers.⁶¹ At the same time, White middle class families began to flee the inner cities for the suburbs leaving behind dubious and decaying prizes for the new urban dwellers.⁶² Suburban governments, with state and federal assistance were able to exclude African-Americans from their vicinities during the 1950's and 1960's.⁶³ For instance, zoning by-laws kept housing prices beyond the reach of most African-American families whose per capita earnings were among the lowest in the United States.⁶⁴ As white collar members of the expanding service sector, a potential political elite, moved away from the cities, the suburban house and automobiles became ingrained into the American psyche as symbols of blissful financial achievement.⁶⁵ Those left behind received scant assistance from the state.

While encouraging homeownership has been the basis of American housing policy, social housing has not been completely ignored. The Great Depression prompted Washington to take tentative steps towards a comprehensive social housing program in 1933 and 1938.⁶⁶ The 1949 National Housing Act was to be "the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family."⁶⁷ The act insured middle class families' mortgages and called for the construction of 810,000 rental units for low income tenants over the course of six years.⁶⁸ By 1960, only 322,000 units were completed. These units were mainly situated in high-rise projects, were isolated from the society's mainstream and were the homes for poor people, mainly African-Americans ostracized by urban renewal projects.⁶⁹ In essence, the state reinforced the society's disparities by offering the most assistance to middle income families. In the end, many of its most needy citizens were denied access to a basic necessity of life: decent and affordable shelter.

While history cannot be reduced to fit the confines of social and political theories, elements from various theories can be incorporated to help explain the development of Canada's and other countries' housing policies. More specifically, a synthesized approach can aid us in understanding the historical realities behind the land assembly program during the 1950's.

1.6.1. ELITISM AND THE LAND ASSEMBLY PROCESS

The doctrine of elitism furnishes useful factors to aid the study of the land assembly program in Kingston during the 1950's.

The principle of elitism, which was drawn from the works of Italians Gaetano Mosca and Vilfredo Pareto and German Robert Michels, is simple. In any society, in any historical era, an authoritative and organized minority holds most of the power.⁷⁰ Classifying ideologies is superficial because only a select few are actually capable of "realizing their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others."⁷¹ While recent scholars rarely defend the full classical elitist position, they maintain that even within liberal democracies, the extent that governments respond to upward pressures should not be overestimated.⁷² Political conflicts are usually between those already occupying influential roles in the power structure and not between members of inner or outer groups.⁷³ The elitist approach is somewhat unyielding and discounts the effect of external groups on the political process. For instance during the 1960's and 1970's the political discourse had substantially broadened to include such groups as tenant associations.⁷⁴

In Kingston during the 1950's, the commercial-civic elite, whose members were drawn from the middle income bracket dominated the city's political, social and economic life.⁷⁵ The lots in Polson Park and Calvin Park projects were priced for the middle income market.⁷⁶ In effect, the land assembly program was a form of elite accommodation, because the local commercial-civic elites helped furnish houses for a small segment of the population. Those citizens incapable of reaching the middle income market were essentially excluded from the program's benefits.

While the elitist perspective is useful in assisting our understanding of the historical realities of the Kingston power structure during the 1950's, it is not completely accurate. It discounts the sometimes intangible sway of economic actors such as Alcan, who are not directly involved in political proceedings. Similarly, the influence of low income families on aldermen cannot be completely discounted despite the absence of written record. Other doctrines offer valuable critiques of elitism.

1.6.2. MARXIST AND PLURALIST CRITIQUES

The elitist approach has been criticized by the Marxist and the Pluralist critics. Summaries of each doctrine help outline each one's characteristics and provide a comparative framework.

Marxism's main contribution to urban studies has been its ability to undermine myths and illusions surrounding the relations between the state, economy and society.⁷⁷ Mainstream literature has tended to characterize the state as being an impartial arbitrator between the interests of capital and labor.⁷⁸ Marxists contend that there is little separation between the state and capital. Governments essentially exist to assist capitalism's accumulation process, legitimize the social order, mediate class conflict, and create the best milieu for commerce to flourish.⁷⁹ As well, sweeping economic processes have tended to be the focus of Marxist scholars at the expense of individuals or even specific cities.⁸⁰

Marxism's flaws include its sometimes excessive rigidity, its tendency to reduce politics to economics, and its denial of

individuals' ability to influence their surroundings.⁸¹ The doctrine's strict categorization of social class in terms of its relation to the means of production has become outmoded. With the rise of the service sector in Canada during the 1950's, a large segment of the population's relation to the means of production has become ambiguous.⁸² Because of the inadequacies of the Marxist approach, a case study of the decision making process has been used to examine the dispersion of power within the community. Similarly, income level, or more particularly, the ability to purchase a home, has been the main criterion in ascertaining social category.⁸³

Pluralists have contended that a small elite cannot control the sources of power within a liberal democratic society.⁸⁴ Implicit in this interpretation is an acceptance of parliamentary democracy, humane bureaucratic administration and the Keynesian welfare state.⁸⁵ The state has the ability to balance the capital's requirements for a profitable environment while providing for its citizens' essential needs.⁸⁶ Within the Canadian Federal system, the municipal government is the closest to the local population. Hence, ideally, municipal government is highly sensitive to the needs and demands of a city's citizenry.⁸⁷

In the case of Kingston and the land assembly program during the 1950's, genuine competition for power existed in the political system. Nonetheless, the competition was restricted to a select circle of participants.⁸⁸ Entrenched interest groups, such as property owners, were capable of manipulating the local decision

making process. For instance, during this period, the property owners were the only group with the right to vote in municipal elections.⁸⁹ Conversely, to be propertyless in this socio-economic climate, was to have been powerless.⁹⁰

1.7. CONCLUSION

To summarize, to analyse the land assembly program is to enable one to examine the intergovernmental dynamics at the local level. As will be shown, the land assembly program only benefited those citizens capable of purchasing a single detached dwelling. Needless to say, the remainder of the population was neglected. This distribution of opportunities to attain shelter originated at the federal level and was maintained by the other two governmental levels. Subsequent chapters will examine the creation of the program and its execution in Kingston, Ontario between 1950 and 1962. The focus of the second chapter will examine the formation of the land assembly program at the upper echelons of the federal and provincial bureaucracies. The third chapter looks at two aborted land assembly projects in Kingston: Butterhill Farm and Knox Farm. The subject of the fourth is the two successful projects: Polson Park and Calvin Park. The final chapter summarizes the evidence and draws some conclusions.

ENDNOTES

1. The minimum annual income required to purchase a home in Calvin Park, one of the two subdivisions, was \$5,800 in 1962. Meanwhile, the average annual income for a man living in Kingston was \$3,978. In other words, a substantial portion of the population was unable to afford to purchase a publicly good. See Nebo S. Oraziotti, "The Changing Structure of the Housebuilding Industry and its Performance in Kingston, Ontario: 1961-1976," Masters Thesis, Queen's University, 1979: 85, "New Subdivision: Taxes Gauged at \$40 Monthly," Kingston Whig Standard (Hereafter KWS) Oct. 24, 1962: 8 and Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Characteristics by Census Tracts, 1961 Census of Kingston, Ontario (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964)
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30. John Short, Housing in Britain: The Post-War Experience (London and New York: Methuen Press, 1982) 13.
31. Ibid., 13.
32. Swenton, Homes Fit For Heroes.
33. Ibid.
34. According to government directives, new dwellings were constructed without such amenities as bathrooms. John Burnett, A Social History of Housing: 1815-1970 (London: David and Charles, 1978) 315.
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37. John Rayner, The Middle Class 2nd ed. (New York: Longman Group 1981) 44-77.
38. For instance while the 1933 Housing Act reduced subsidies to local authorities that would have used to construct rental housing, it increase assistance to building societies and eased rent controls. Building societies were roughly equivalent to North American development firms. Short, Housing in Britain, 34.
39. During this period, the English standard of living had an overall improvement. Nonetheless. the majority of British citizens still rented their accommodation from public and private sources. W. D. Rubinstein, Wealth and Inequality in Britain (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1986) 74, 84.
40. Ibid, 122.
41. An estimated 200,000 housing units were destroyed and another quarter of million were damaged beyond repair during the war. Gill Burke, Housing and Social Justice: The Role of Housing Policy in British Housing (London: Longman, 1981) 17.
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44. Ibid., 46.
45. The 1947 Town and Country called for 387 million pounds to be used by the government to purchase development rights from land owners. It strengthened government control of land use by requiring developers to request permission from public officials before beginning a project. If the applicant was denied permission he was not eligible for compensation. Finally a betterment levy of 100 per cent was charged on the project's capital gains. Peter Hall, Harry Gracey, Roy Dewitt, and Ray Thomas, The Containment of Urban England 2 vols. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1973) I:106-114.
46. Cox, Adversary Politics and Land 125.
47. Short, Housing in Britain 77.
48. Ibid., 77.
49. Peter Hall, "The Urban Growth Process: A Summary and a Comparison," The Containment of Urban England Vol I: 625-629.
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51. Short, Housing in Britain 47-52.
52. In 1947, 61% of all residential dwellings were rented from private landlords. By 1960 this figure fell to 31%. Burnett, A Social History of Housing 47.
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54. Ibid., 305.
54. With its three basic levels of government, the American and Canadian federal systems are superficially alike. Analogously the American municipalities are under state jurisdiction while the Canadian municipalities are well within the provincial sphere of influence. However, the American federal government interacts with City Government more readily than does its Canadian counterpart. Jewell Phillips, Municipal Government and Administration in America (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960) 36.
- As an illustration of the jumble local authorities, in the New York City area, nearly 1400 distinct political entities existed in 1961. Robert Wood, 1400 Governments (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961) 69.
55. Jewell Phillips, Municipal Government and Administration in America (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960) 36.
56. John C. Bacher, "Canadian Housing "Policy" in Perspective," Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine XV. 1. June/juin 1986: 15.
57. Ibid., 15.
58. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier 203.
59. Ibid., 208.
60. Ibid., 231-244.
61. John Bollens and Henry Schmandt, The Metropolis: Its People, Politics and Economic Life 4th ed. (New York: Harper's Row Publishers, 1982) 45-48.
62. Marion Clawson, Suburban Land Conversion in the United States: An Economic and Governmental Process (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971) 40.
63. Michael Danielson, The Politics of Exclusion (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976) 2.
64. Officially, a 1917 Supreme Court ruling nullified municipal ordinance that was racially discriminatory. However, segregation continued, albeit, in more subtle forms.

- Phillips, Municipal Government and Administration in America 253 and The President's Committee on Urban Housing, A Decent Home: The Report of the President's Committee on Urban Housing (Washington D. C.: 1968) 53.
65. C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951) 14.
 66. Phillips, Municipal Government 505-507.
 67. Citizens Commission on Civil Rights, "The Federal Government and the Equal Housing Opportunity: A Continuing Failure," Critical Perspectives on Housing eds. Rachel Bratt, Chester Hartman, and Ann Meyerson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986) 300.
 68. Ibid., 300.
 69. The Presidents Committee on Urban Housing, A Decent Home 53.
 70. The most prominent works in this field include Gaetonio Mosca, The Ruling Class, trans. and ed, Hannah D. Kahn (New York and London: McGraw-Hill Book Co, Inc., 1939), Vilfredo Pareto, The Mind and Society 3 vols, trans. Andrew Bengiorno and Arthur Livingston (New York: Harcourt, Bruce and Company, 1935) and Robert Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy trans. Eden and Debar Paul (New York Free Press, 1967)
 71. This definition of the term "power" is generally accepted among most social scientists. Max Weber cited in David C. Hammock, "Problems in the Historical Study of Power in the Cities and Towns of the United States: 1800-1960," The American Historical Review 83. 2. April, 1978: 323-349. See also Terence Ball, "Power," The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought ed. David Miller (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1987) 397-400.
 72. Geraint Perry, "Elitism," Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Life 132.
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 74. See Harris, Democracy in Kingston.
 75. Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics: 1965-1970 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) 29-49 and James Simmons, Canadian Urban System as a Political System, Part 1: The

Conceptual Framework (Toronto: Center For Urban and Community Studies 1983)

76. "New Subdivision: Taxes Gauged at \$40 Monthly," KWS Oct. 24, 1962: 8.
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81. Magnusson, "Political Science, Political Economy and the Local State," 30.
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83. Porter, Vertical Mosaic 11.
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Also see: William E. Connolly, "Pluralism," The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought 376-377 and Robert Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956) and Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961) and Nelson Polsby, Community Power and Political Theory (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

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86. W. Christian and C. Campbell, Political Parties and Ideologies in Canada: Liberals, Conservatives, Socialists, Nationalists 2nd edition (Toronto: McGraw Ryerson Ltd., 1983) 6-7.
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CHAPTER TWO CREATING THE LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In 1949, the Minister of Reconstruction, Robert Winters presented an amendment to the National Housing Act (NHA) which became the federal government's first substantial post-war housing policy initiative. The government used this amendment to respond to various pressures. The federal government had concluded its program of constructing residences for War Veterans. Meanwhile, assorted public housing groups were attempting to pressure Ottawa into implementing a more extensive public housing program. At the same time, a shortage of serviced land hampered residential construction.¹ This amendment proposed two related programs in reply to these impulses: land assembly and public housing. The former generated serviced land primarily for middle class homebuyers. The latter provided rental housing for those unable to purchase a home.² Ideally, a balanced governmental housing policy would have helped provide sufficient shelter for all its citizens. The evidence is that during the 1950's the Canadian state concentrated on financing single detached houses for middle income families. This chapter examines the circumstances behind this ingrained governmental inequality.

2.2. THE DEFINITIONS AND GOALS OF LAND ASSEMBLY AND PUBLIC HOUSING

Land assembly, according to the 1949 NHA, called for public authorities to purchase land, to plan a residential subdivision, make provisions for its essential fronting services such as sidewalks, water mains and sewers and sell the serviced lots on the

open markets. The governments involved pursued two basic objectives with this endeavor: ease the shortage of serviced land and contain the spread of undisciplined urban sprawl. Because of the indirect nature of the subsidy offered to the consumer, the result was that only middle class buyers or corporate developers were capable of purchasing one of the land assembly lots.³

Providing inexpensive rental accommodation for low income tenants was the aim of the public housing. To implement such a program, the state had to take on a myriad of duties, including building, renting, and selecting the occupants for the various projects. Unlike the land assembly venture, subsidized housing was an unprofitable proposition and not an attractive investment for private sector real estate interests.⁴. The rent that the government could charge was below the amount needed to recover a unit's production and service costs if low income families were able to afford the units.⁵ During the 1950's Queen's Park and Ottawa did not provide a sufficient quantity of affordable housing to constitute a suitable cushion for their less fortunate citizens. This structured inequality can be more fully understood after a brief sketch of the various pieces of housing legislation leading up to the 1949 NHA has been undertaken.

2.3.1. FEDERAL HOUSING POLICY: THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1919-1939

Regardless of partisan stripe, the federal government has traditionally preferred to allow the free market to determine the supply of housing.⁶ Only at times of crisis, has the government intervened into the housing market and tried to alleviate some of

its inherent inequalities.⁷ Typically, these efforts have been short-term and too insubstantial to have a dramatic impact.

Threatened with the prospect of thousands of disgruntled veterans rebelling at the end of the First World War, Prime Minister Robert Borden decided that the dominion government would actively intervene into the housing field. It used the War Measures Act to bypass the provincial legislatures, and loan \$25 million to municipalities for housing construction.⁸ This effort overrode constitutional barriers because, according to the British North America Act, municipalities were squarely within the provincial jurisdiction.⁹ Nonetheless, the program was inconsequential and only six thousand units were constructed using the funds.¹⁰

Searching for a means to stimulate the economy during the Great Depression, Prime Minister Richard Bennett's regime turned to the housing sector. Its 1935 Dominion Housing Act (DHA) made low interest loans available to homebuyers.¹¹ In Depression ridden Canada, only citizens in the top twenty per cent of the income range could afford to take advantage of the available assistance.¹² As a result, fewer than two thousand residential units were built using the DHA monies.¹³

The War Measures Act and the DHA were temporary measures and attained only limited results. Conservative Prime Ministers Borden and Bennett were reluctant to abandon, however momentarily, the dominion government's traditional laissez-faire attitude towards housing. Correspondingly, the two regimes relied on loans and

mortgages instead of actually constructing houses. Only a select portion of the population were even capable of taking advantage of these two ventures. When Mackenzie King's Liberals took power in 1935, they did not completely abandon their predecessors' policies. Their 1938, 1944 and 1949 National Housing Acts (NHA) were very similar to the DHA.¹⁴ The only exceptions to this general pattern came during the Second World War.

2.3.2. WORLD WAR II AND ITS AFTERMATH

Booming defence industries during the Second World War attracted droves of workers to principal urban centers, and a severe housing shortage resulted. In response to the potentially desperate situation, the dominion government instituted the Wartime Housing Limited (WHL) which was responsible for constructing, renting, and managing dwellings for workers. From its inception to its termination in 1949, the WHL was responsible for the production of nearly twenty thousand units.¹⁵ The Veterans' Rental Housing Program, an offshoot of the WHL, produced almost thirty thousand units for the returning soldiers before its cancellation in 1949.¹⁶ These undertakings were transitory, aimed exclusively towards parties directly involved in the war effort, and were dismantled shortly after hostilities ceased with the units being sold to the tenants.¹⁷

At the conclusion of the war, the dominion government reverted to its traditional belief that private enterprise would satisfy Canada's housing needs. This move was part of the government's larger goal of removing some of its more stringent wartime

regulatory measures such as price controls. It was not universally accepted.¹⁸ A Sub-Committee on Reconstruction, responsible for housing issues, recommended that the government undertake a substantial publicly supported rental housing program.¹⁹ C. D. Howe, the formidable minister in charge of housing policy, was convinced that an extensive social housing program was unnecessary. Wartime social reforms such as Family Allowances, would supplement impoverished Canadians' incomes and enable them to compete on the private market for accommodation.²⁰ A public housing program, Howe reasoned, was undesirable because it directly competed against private sector firms and weakened the free market system. The dominion government would only meet with continual complications, such as constitutional entanglements if it decided to become a permanent residential landlord.²¹ Howe firmly believed that large efficient corporations would satisfy Canada' housing needs.²² Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent shared his ministers attitudes towards housing.

In 1947, Louis St. Laurent announced, "No government of which I am a part will ever pass legislation for subsidized housing."²³ Upon becoming Prime Minister in 1948, St. Laurent reluctantly decided to implement a public housing program for low income families. The buoyant demand for housing owing to the rapidly increasing number of families was one of the major reasons behind the Prime Minister's decision.²⁴ The Liberal government was still firmly committed to private enterprise and devoted most of its efforts to offering Canadians the opportunity to purchase a home.²⁵

An extensive public housing program was politically unacceptable because it would have offended homeowners concerned about higher taxes. Private real estate interests would have been concerned about losing tenants or perspective homebuyers to a government program. The federal government was sensitive to the fact that a substantial portion of the population did not want a comprehensive subsidized housing program and acted accordingly.²⁶ The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) became the federal government's principal agent in the housing field.

In 1946, an act of parliament created the CMHC which administered the NHA. The crown corporation's duties included: increasing the volume of housing; administering various programs such as the land assembly and public housing initiatives and providing statistical information in housing.²⁷ With its board of directors and healthy annual profits the crown corporation represented a smoothly run private sector mortgage business.²⁸ While the federal government tried to vacate its direct interventionist role in the housing arena, it was still an influential force. As an illustration, the CMHC was the major distributor of housing funds in the country.²⁹ Builders were required to comply with CMHC's construction standards before they could obtain some of its capital. As a result, the crown corporation controlled the design of many of the nation's subdivisions.³⁰

A land assembly project involved all tiers of the CMHC hierarchy from the branch office located in the municipality to the

regional office situated in a provincial capital, and to the head office in Ottawa. At the apex, Cabinet approval was needed before any large expenditure for a project could be made.³¹ Being part of an intergovernmental program, a land assembly project naturally involved the responsible provincial government. In Ontario, the provincial government's representative was the Department of Planning and Development (DPD).

2.3.3. ONTARIO'S CITY PLANNING AND HOUSING POLICIES

The land assembly program corresponded with a significant period in Ontario's socio-economic and political development. More than half of the province's population had come to reside in cities with 10,000 or more inhabitants.³² Gradually, the service sector began superseding the manufacturing sector to become the dominant part of the steadily growing provincial economy.³³ Among the largest challenges facing Premier George Drew and later Leslie Frost was the electorate's demands for comprehensive governmental services to ensure that a severe downturn was averted.

Frost, who was premier between 1949 and 1962, readily accepted the calls for an activist role and took on obligations for the state. He was careful not to overstep the boundaries set by the majority of voters and was rewarded by a string of electoral victories.³⁴ The premier was an effective administrator with a well-organized and coordinated cabinet and was able to undertake ambitious projects.³⁵ His relationship with the federal government was generally cordial and resulted in such joint ventures as the St. Lawrence Seaway and the land assembly program.³⁶ Managing the

province's expanding urban environment and coping with its housing shortages were among his primary concerns. Frost enthusiastically supported the land assembly program and was slightly more sympathetic towards the public housing program than were his federal counterparts.³⁷ The primary agent of the provincial housing and city planning policies was the Department of Planning and Development.

The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) represented Queen's Park's interests during the land assembly program. Conservative Party leader George Drew won the 1943 provincial election because he successfully answered the voters' calls for reforms that could avert a potential post-war economic downturn.³⁸ In 1944, Drew established the DPD, as promised, to help large municipal governments cope with their mushrooming population and undisciplined sprawl surrounding their borders.³⁹

Despite municipal governments' initial enthusiasm at the DPD's inception, a variety of factors prevented it from functioning smoothly or effectively throughout its short tenure.⁴⁰ The premier originally intended to give the DPD instantaneous prestige by personally becoming its first minister. He decided, however, to become the Minister of Education and Dana Porter, a less prestigious minister, headed the new department.⁴¹ The DPD's role was never clearly defined nor distinguished from the already established Department of Municipal Affairs.⁴² Until 1956, the DPD lacked a deputy minister to coordinate its activities.⁴³ As a result of these shortcomings, the DPD was unable to adequately

support city government officials' urban planning efforts. Accordingly, the municipal governments expressed their frustrations over the provincial government's performance and gradually began to cultivate their own expertise.⁴⁴ During the early 1960's, Queen's Park streamlined its bureaucracy and the Department of Planning and Development disappeared. Most of its operations were absorbed by the Department of the Municipal Affairs.⁴⁵

The CMHC and the DPD, along with the respective municipal governments, were the main bureaucratic actors in the land assembly process. The association was not one of equals because the CMHC had more capital resources and specialists available than the other two parties. Despite its larger size, various restraints prevented the CMHC from bulldozing the others into submission. While squabbles occurred during the proceedings, all sides agreed on the land assembly program's basic objective of providing single detached houses for the middle income market.

2.4. THE HOUSING SHORTAGE

During the immediate post-World War II era, Canada faced one of its most severe housing shortages in its history.⁴⁶ For almost twenty years during the Depression and War, the construction industry's ability to rejuvenate the nation's housing stock had been handicapped. Consequently, in 1946, many Canadians were forced to live in dilapidated rooming houses.⁴⁷ The return of a million and half veterans and many marriages only exacerbated the already trying situation.⁴⁸ As the demobilized soldiers' fruitfully celebrated their homecoming, the "baby boom" came into

being and rate of family formation outstripped the building industry's ability to construct homes.⁴⁹ As a result, nearly half a million families either rented their accommodation or doubled up with other families in 1949.⁵⁰ On a per capita basis Ontario faced the harshest situation with almost a third of its families falling into this category.⁵¹

Numerous factors frustrated the construction industry's efforts to solve the housing shortage. Canada's rapidly growing and urbanizing population was overstretching housing supplies.⁵² These demands caused the majority of the local authorities in Ontario, and in other parts of the country, to experience financial hardship and forced them to discontinue their pre-war practise of providing builders with serviced land.⁵³ In an attempt to impose order on disorderly urban sprawl, provincial and city officials only granted subdivision approval to companies able to prove that they could furnish their projects with sufficient services.⁵⁴ The construction industry during this period was composed mainly of small, disorganized firms incapable of coping with these added demands.⁵⁵ In short, the nation's housing predicament would have only worsened without substantial public sector intervention into the field. The land assembly program was to provide subsidies to ease the development costs facing the builder. In turn, the homebuyer was to benefit from the lower prices.

2.5. ESTABLISHING THE LAND ASSEMBLY AND PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMS

In 1949, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent discussed with the provincial premiers the possibility of embarking a shared capital

cost housing venture. Federal officials considered Ontario to be the most important province in such a scheme because of its size, the severity of its housing shortage and the cordial relations between Premier Leslie Frost and St. Laurent.⁵⁶ In August, the Federal Minister of Reconstruction and Supply, Robert Winters met with the Ontario Premier, to outline their respective positions and to commence bargaining.⁵⁷

After various rounds of negotiations, the governments hammered out a two pronged capital cost sharing arrangement to deal with the housing situation. The land assembly program which was to supply builders with adequate supplies of serviced land was the first prong, the second being the public housing program which was to furnish rental accommodation for low income tenants.⁵⁸ The federal government was far more enthusiastic about supporting the former initiative than the latter one. For instance, in 1947, the future Prime Minister St. Laurent said that he was against implementing a comprehensive public housing program.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the trying times and political pressure from various social housing advocacy groups had forced the Liberal government to at least voice its support for public housing program.⁶⁰ Throughout the 1950's, the federal government's backing of social housing was less than fervent.⁶¹

The working arrangements for the land assembly and public housing programs were eventually worked out. Each project's cost and potential revenues were divided on a 75:25 basis with the dominion government being responsible for the larger share.

Procedurally, executing a land assembly project was a relatively straight forward affair.⁶² In contrast, at least eighty steps were required to be completed before a public housing project could be finished.⁶³ This bureaucratic barrier ensured that only the most committed and politically astute municipalities could attain a subsidized housing project. These were not necessarily areas with greatest need, and so an equitable distribution of public resources was not guaranteed.⁶⁴

Leslie Frost was concerned about the housing situation in his province. His August 8 meeting with Winters was congenial and the prospect of much needed federal funds was welcome.⁶⁵ The province's second mortgage scheme had been less than successful and Frost gladly abandoned it as soon as suitable provisions were made with Ottawa.⁶⁶ Public housing was another issue that Frost was anxious to deal with. Urban reformers had long promoted public housing and a few projects had been established under municipal auspices with minimal provincial assistance, the most recent one being the Regent Park North apartments in Toronto, which was constructed after an intense referendum campaign during 1947.⁶⁷ Queen's Park was in danger of being symbolically upstaged by more progressive junior governments and hence was anxious to cooperate with the dominion government.

Keeping a price gap between the purchasers of a land assembly project's lots and the entrants to public housing project was one of the dominion government's major aims.⁶⁸ Throughout the land assembly program's life, establishing prices for a land assembly

lot was a contentious issue. From the buyer's standpoint, an inexpensive lot price was naturally a desirable proposition. From the developers' perspective, such a pricing practice was a potential threat from the excessive state interference in the marketplace. Wary of a potential confrontation with builders, who during the 1950's were becoming steadily stronger, the dominion government elected to set lot prices at a level acceptable to seventy per cent of an area's builders.⁶⁹ In this respect, the lot prices were essentially a compromise between two almost diametrically opposed interests: the consumers and the producers.⁷⁰ The producer and to a lesser extent homeowners selling their houses were given the nod and hence the land assembly venture could not be considered a "low priced" endeavor.⁷¹ In 1956, the average annual income of a housebuyer using NHA funds was \$5,312 which was over the midpoint of the nation's income range.⁷² While the land assembly program catered to the middle income homebuying aspirations, the public housing program was intended to furnish shelter for those who could not afford to partake in the homebuying dream.

After extended discussions, the CMHC and DPD agreed to allow only those families with annual incomes not exceeding \$3,000 to live in low income subsidized housing projects.⁷³ This restriction ensured that the program would not either compete with the private rental or homebuying market. Moreover, the CMHC intentionally designed rental projects so that they were austere and stark.⁷⁴ The distinctiveness and isolation of these projects only further

stigmatized their occupants whom society had already labelled as being lazy welfare recipients and failures.⁷⁵

Frost's outlook towards public housing was more supportive than the federal government's. In 1951, Queen's Park representatives presented their federal counterparts with a proposal for five thousand rental housing units specifically for low and middle income families with children.⁷⁶ Within Ontario this proposal was not universally acclaimed. On one hand, several Ontario mayors complained that the suggested numbers were not sufficient to meet the demands for rental housing.⁷⁷ On the other hand, developers such as W. Grisenthwaite, Vice President of the National Builders Association, protested that such an endeavor would undermine Canada's heritage of individualism and homeownership.⁷⁸ In reality, private sector builders were far more concerned that a such an endeavor would erode some of their profit base, a substantial portion of which was derived from NHA mortgage funds.⁷⁹ Frost's target figure was not reached during his regime. It was not until the 1960's when the populace began to insist that the government play a more active role in the housing market, that the publicly funded Ontario Housing Corporation was formed and became the province's largest landlord.⁸⁰

2.6. CONCLUSION: THE PROGRAMS' PERFORMANCE

Far more land assembly lots than public housing units were generated during the 1950's. By 1952, a reported 2,078 public housing units had either been or shortly would be erected in Ontario. By comparison, 11,345 land assembly lots were sold or

were almost ready for market.⁸¹ These lopsided figures were not atypical and corresponded to the national trends. For instance, between 1949 and 1963 only 0.7 per cent of the total residential output was subsidized public housing.⁸² In contrast, NHA funds were the basis for nearly seventy per cent of dwelling starts.⁸³ Clearly, the state gave middle income families more abundant opportunities to acquire homes than it did to its less fortunate citizens. Nonetheless, neither one of the endeavors could be considered an outstanding success.

While the land assembly program furnished valuable and well-organized serviced subdivisions, it did not attack the core problems that faced the expanding municipalities which included overworked and obsolete heavy municipal services such as trunk sewer lines and water purification plants.⁸⁴ CMHC officials realized this shortcoming and in 1960 introduced the Municipal Infrastructure Program which provided municipalities with loans to construct or expand sewage disposal systems.⁸⁵

Similarly, the endeavor did not dramatically affect serviced land prices at either the local or national scale. Locally, the public authorities were wary of offending builders by selling lots far below the prevailing market prices.⁸⁶ Likewise, the endeavor did not yield enough serviced land to combat the inflated land prices. The average price for a lot with a single-detached dwelling climbed by 150 per cent between 1951 and 1961.⁸⁷ In essence, this venture assisted middle income families to cope with the rising prices and to purchase a house.⁸⁸

Evidently, the interests of the Canadians who could not afford to purchase a house were not taken into account when the decisions that contributed to meager output of publicly funded rental units for low income families.⁸⁹ Two factors contributed this apparent lack of concern. Firstly, there was the attitude held by the members of the politically important middle income group, who earned between \$5,000 and \$7,000 annually. They argued that since they carried a large portion of the country's tax burden, they should receive a correspondingly large share of the benefits.⁹⁰ Public housing, which was intended for low income families was not one their major concern. Secondly, an organized movement capable of substantially swaying the federal government's aversion towards public housing did not exist during the 1950's.

An examination of the dynamics of the distribution of housing resources at the local level accentuates the complexion of federalism's power structure.

ENDNOTES

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2. Robert Winters, "Statement in the House of Commons by the Honourable R. H. Winters, Minister of Reconstruction and Supply, September 21st, 1949," Unpublished Statement, City of Kingston Records. Queen's University Archives (Hereafter QUA).
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7. John Bacher, "Canadian Housing "Policy" in Perspective," Urban History Review/Revue histoire urbaine (Hereafter UHR/Rhu) XV. 1. June/juin 1986: 5.
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Corporation, 1988) 18 and Jill Wade, "Wartime Housing at the
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33. D. R. Richmond, The Evolution of Economic Policy (Toronto: Ontario Economic Council, 1977) 1.
34. Roger Graham, Old Man Ontario: Leslie Frost (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 174-175.
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48. Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English, Canada Since 1945: Politics, Power and Provincialism (Toronto: University of Toronto, Press, 1981) 99 and John Miron, Housing in Post-War Canada: Demographic Change, Household Formation and Housing Demand (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) 191
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50. Firestone, Residential Real Estate, 208.
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56. D. B. Mansur, Letter to R. H. Winters, August 19, 1949. RG 56, Vol. 132, PAC.
In comparison to the frigid relations between Premier George Drew and Prime Minister MacKenzie King, the relationship between Frost and St. Laurent was warm. Graham, Old Man Ontario: Leslie Frost , 156-158.

57. D. B. Mansur, Letter to R. H. Winters, August 19, 1949. RG 56, Vol 132, PAC.
58. Ibid.
59. Bacher, "Canadian Housing "Policy" in Perspective," 10.
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61. David Mansur suggested to R. H. Winters that the dominion government should devise a technique by which the provincial government was responsible for initiating public housing project. He reasoned that Queen's Park was less than enthusiastic about such a venture and thus would launch as few projects as possible. In turn, the provincial government could also attract criticism that would have been aimed at Ottawa. D. B. Mansur to R. H. Winters, Aug. 19, 1949. RG 56, Vol. 132, PAC.
62. Department of Planning and Development, Letter to Clerks of all Municipalities having a Population of 5,000 concerning Federal and Provincial Housing Projects, Sept. 5, 1952. RG 56, Vol. 132, PAC.
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66. Ibid., 240.
67. Ibid., 238. Property owners were reticent about their tax dollars being used to assist the propertyless. Albert Rose, Regent Park: A Study in Slum Clearance (Toronto: University Toronto Press, 1958).
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86. Angus McClaskey, Letter to Stewart Bates, May 10, 1956. RG 56, Vol, 132, PAC.
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88. Peter Spurr, "Five Land Banks," City Magazine 2. 1. March-April 1976: 12.
89. Carver, Compassionate Landscape, 108.
90. Irving Jay Goffman, The Burden of Canadian Tax: Allocation of Federal, Provincial and Local Taxes Among Income Taxes (Toronto: Canadian Tax Foundation, 1962) 7-9.

CHAPTER THREE BUTTERHILL FARM AND KNOX FARM FAILURES

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Between 1950 and 1956, the federal and provincial governments, with Kingston City Council's compliance, tried unsuccessfully to implement two land assembly projects named Butterhill Farm and Knox Farm. These endeavors were to help alleviate the city's severe housing shortage and to attract modern, clean and light industries. In the end, neither of these goals were accomplished. Nevertheless, these failures enable us to examine the dynamics of federalism at the local level. In essence, the local commercial-civic elite sought to use the program to benefit middle income families.

3.2. THE ROLE AND COMPOSITION OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

When a land assembly project was executed, a municipal government had been a vital component because it funnelled services and resources downwards from the federal and provincial governments.¹ Of the three tiers of federalism, a city government was the closest to the citizens, and was, in theory, the most responsive to the community's needs.² Frequent elections, unclouded by partisan politics, cleansed the system and ensured that politicians were accountable to the electorate.³ Evidently municipal governments were the keepers of pluralistic participatory democratic values and ensured that an underlying consensus within a community existed before a major decision, such as a land assembly project, could be made.⁴ Following this logic, all sectors of society could benefit from the goods and services

distributed by the local authorities.⁵ In reality, this was not an accurate portrayal of the land assembly program. It becomes apparent that city politics in Kingston, as in other Canadian communities during the 1950s, were controlled by the commercial-civic elite who basically acted to benefit themselves or potential members. By continuance, the land assembly followed this rudimentary pattern.

The biennially elected, twenty-two member Kingston City Council was dominated by members of Kingston's commercial-civic elite during the 1950's and 60's. Local entrepreneurs, mainly presidents or owners of small businesses contributed nearly a third of the aldermen between 1950 and 1962.⁶ Likewise, the local chapter of the Chamber of Commerce, a businessman's association, made its trade orientated views felt by City Council during this period. For instance, in 1962, the chapter contributed eight aldermen, three of these were members of its board of directors.⁷ By no means was municipal government exclusively the preserve of the merchant class. Queens's professors were regularly served as aldermen and at times even as mayor.⁸ During this period, ten aldermen had skilled and unionized blue collar background. Nonetheless, only a minority city's labor force could be classified as being skilled or unionized.⁹ In short, City Council essentially represented the enfranchised members of the community. The City Council did not represent those disenfranchised individuals unable to participate in the political process because of property restrictions.¹⁰

Kingston's seven wards were divided almost exclusively along class and occupational lines.¹¹ The city was partitioned by its commercial main thoroughfare, Princess Street, into two spheres with nearly all of the members of the professional middle class residing in the southern wards while the northern wards sheltered less affluent occupants.¹² Nonetheless, the northern sections were not completely impoverished. For example, well paid Alcan employees ensured that Frontenac Ward had one of the city's highest rates of homeownership.¹³ Of the seven wards, only Sydenham Ward qualified as being mixed with accommodation ranging from seedy rental units to grand mansions and institutions varying from Queens University to heavy waterfront industries.¹⁴

Municipal politics revolved around real property. Its ownership decided who could vote. Until 1960, only those Kingston residents who were over twenty one and owned \$400.00 worth of real property could participate in municipal elections as either candidates or voters.¹⁵ Property taxes fuelled city government. For instance, an estimated three quarters of all municipal revenues in Canada were derived from property taxes by 1955.¹⁶ As well, the twin tasks of assessing taxable property and determining the rate of taxation has customarily been the most controversial event of any City Council's fiscal year.¹⁷ "Cutters", on one hand, argued that low tax rates were necessary because they encourage homeownership and commerce. On the other hand, "boosters" asserted that large-scale capital works projects were necessary to attract industry to the city, even if the tax rate needed to be raised.¹⁸

Yet, despite election rhetoric, economic realities forced municipal politicians to raise the tax rates. Property owners were inclined to be bitter about any property tax hikes, necessary or otherwise. In Kingston, the property owners were especially stingy. The city had a per capita tax levy that was low in comparison to two other communities of comparable size: Kitchener and Peterborough.

TABLE 3.1.
CITY FINANCES¹⁹

CITY AND YEAR	ASSESSED POPULATION	PER CAPITA TAX LEVY (\$)	PER CAPITA SURPLUS (\$) (S) DEFICIT (\$) (D)
Kingston			
1951	41,056	43.77	0.44 (D)
1961	48,432	118.08	1.91 (S)
Kitchener			
1951	42,212	58.41	0.06 (D)
1961	74,522	118.04	2.17 (S)
Peterborough			
1951	37,192	59.55	3.00 (D)
1961	46,803	121.67	1.23 (S)

Regulating real property use was one of the City Council's, top priorities since it enacted its first zoning bylaw in 1941.²⁰ More specifically, preserving property values by not mixing lower and middle income families was one of City Council's top priorities.²¹ This structured inequality was not hidden from either of senior governments.²² In short, while the land assembly program intended to, at least officially, alleviate the housing crisis, it only accentuated the unequal distribution of opportunities and resources in Kingston.

3.3. KINGSTON'S HOUSING CRISIS

During the 1940's and 1950's Kingston had one of the most

severe housing plights in Ontario. Mayor C. A. Curtis's 1947 survey concluded that city's housing stock was in poor condition especially in the northern and western neighbourhoods.²³ The local government lacked financial assistance and did not take substantive action to approve conditions.²⁴ Similarly, the shortage was not considered newsworthy by the community's press, and City Council continued its policy of inertia until the mid-1950's.

During the mid-1950's, an activist, Reverend T. H. Good, was among the first to draw notice to the city's substandard housing conditions.²⁵ Albert Rose, a leading housing expert and governmental advisor followed suit in 1956 and bluntly told the City Council that the miserable local conditions surprised him.²⁶

The 1961 census only proved that Kingston was one of the worst housed communities in Ontario. The poor condition of Kingston's housing stock is especially evident when compared to the housing stock of Kitchener, Peterborough and the province.

TABLE 3.2.
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS FOR SPECIFIED CITIES: 1961²⁷

	KINGSTON	KITCHENER	PETER- BOROUGH	ONTARIO
Total Dwellings	13,931	20,598	12,853	1,640,750
Single Detached (%)	50.3	67.3	76.1	69.5
Dwellings In Need of Major Repair (%)	4.8	2.3	3.4	4.5
Period of Construction				
Before 1920 (%)	45.1	25.6	42.3	34.9
After 1945 (%)	34.5	51.7	37.5	43.0
Rented (%)	50.2	29.3	30.1	29.5
Average Monthly Rent (\$)	76.0	64.0	62.0	76.0

Kingston's dwellings were older, cost more and were in worse condition than dwellings in other similarly sized municipalities. Just over half of the cities' accommodation was rented. In contrast, roughly a quarter of Ontario's residences in 1961 were rented.²⁵ In 1961, around 37 per cent of the Kingston's population were able to purchase a house and enjoy the privacy and possible capital appreciation that such an acquisition entailed.²⁶ Only those from the middle income category could participate in this acquisitive action.²⁷ By no means was an individual guaranteed an eventual profit when he purchased a home. His potential profit could have been sabotaged by financially draining maintenance costs and the prospect of attempting to sell the house during a market downturn. Nonetheless, a homeowner did have a far greater chance of having a return on his investment than did a renter.

Kingston's tenants were not a homogeneous group. Queens's residential facilities were circumscribed and could not accommodate the rapidly expanding studentry; hence, almost three thousand students lived in rooming houses or apartments during the mid-1960's.²⁸ However, this was not an impoverished assortment of individuals. For instance, in 1956, an estimated half of Canada's studentry came from families in the top thirty per cent of the country's income bracket.²⁹ Accordingly Queens's students could afford Sydenham Ward's, frequently run down yet relatively conveniently located rooming houses.³⁰

In contrast to Queens students' relatively central location, the city's low income tenants were practically exiled to two

northeastern Wards, St. Lawrence and Cataraqui Wards. Rents in these areas were among the lowest in the city. Accordingly, the shelter offered in these areas was among the city's most tattered.³¹ Because the lodgers in these districts were generally either working or welfare poor, they were immobile and could not escape their dilapidated surroundings.³² Kingston's power structure was strongly affected by its rentier economy. Despite a deficiency of conclusive evidence of collusion between City Council and the landlords, without a doubt, the former body was influenced by the latter clique.³³ For example, in 1953, Queens Park passed legislation which was a continuation of previous federal and provincial acts giving municipal governments' the right to implement rent controls. Lobby groups such as United Electrical Workers and the Labor Council wanted the local government to maintain rent controls, but, the issue soon dropped from sight.³⁴ The landlords did not want their profits cut by bureaucratic regulations and the aldermen, many of whom were probably landlords themselves, agreed.

Private industry alone during the 1950's was incapable of offering a majority of Kingstonians the opportunity to purchase a home. As in other centers in Ontario, Kingston's construction industry during the 1950's was composed mainly of diminutive and inefficient firms.³⁵ In 1954, the city's federal representative, W. J. Henderson estimated that almost three hundred units were needed annually to properly house Kingston's expanding population. Yet production never reached this level during this period.³⁶ A

critical deficiency of serviced land also hampered builders' ability to generate sufficient housing starts.³⁷ In short, state assistance was needed to enable the bulk of the populace to purchase a home.

3.4. LAND ASSEMBLY AND KINGSTON'S CHANGING ECONOMIC COMPLEXION

Butterhill Farm and Knox Farm were part of the municipal government's ongoing effort to bring prosperity to Kingston in an evolving economic climate. During the post-World War II era industrial parks featuring modern and clean industries replaced heavy waterfront industries as symbols of prosperity.³⁸ An industrial plant was a prize commodity for a community because of its well-paying jobs and lucrative tax revenues which the municipal could use to alleviate the property tax burden placed on home owners. Yet, despite, local government's best efforts, Kingston still remained under industrialized when compared to other communities such as Kitchener.³⁹ With Kingston Township and Pittsburgh Township hemming off its borders to the west and the north, Kingston was essentially situated on a peninsula without freedom to expand.⁴⁰ This deficiency of suitable industrial land only heightened the aldermen's uneasiness especially after the St. Lawrence Seaway opened in 1957, and rendered most of Kingston's waterfront industries obsolete.⁴¹

In the Kingston area, the multi-national Alcan Corporation's branch plant was an economic elite and was the city's largest single employer and payer of industrial taxes.⁴² Except for issues directly affecting its interests, Alcan Corporation stayed outside

of municipal politics, yet it encouraged both managers and employees to participate.⁴³ From the perspectives of Alcan and the local civic-commercial elite, a profitable working relationship was mutually advantageous.⁴⁴ Service industries partially compensated Kingston for its lack of industrial vigor. Modestly sized establishments such as dry cleaners which catered to a neighborhood clientele were a sub-category of the service sector. Larger institutions such as Queens University, Kingston Penitentiary and various hospitals constituted another sub-category.⁴⁵ These establishments especially Queens University, were important influences on the local economy as well as the political process.

As with the Alcan branch plant, except for issues affecting its welfare, Queens University rarely intervened directly into the political process. However, City Council could not afford to ignore or mortally offend the university which could re-locate if necessary. Queens has customarily been one of the city's largest employer with a healthy payroll flowing into the community.⁴⁶ Its students, who were frequently from middle income families, have been important sources of revenue for the local merchants and landlords. Housing for students was one of the institution's constant concerns especially during the mid-1960's when it began to expand substantially.⁴⁷ According to available evidence, senior Queens officials did not publicly express any views on the land assembly program. However, they almost assuredly were in favor of the projects which would have provided suitable houses for staff

members. For instance, a Queens Lecturer, the lowest ranking academic staff member at the university earned almost six thousand dollars in 1962. With this salary, he was able to purchase a Calvin Park home.⁴⁸

A substantial portion of the city's labor force was employed in the service sector.

TABLE 3.3.
KINGSTON: LABOR FORCE BY INDUSTRY (%)⁴⁹

	1931	1941	1951
Manufacturing	14.5	32.8	26.7
Construction	8.8	10.0	6.4
Transportation	11.0	6.9	4.9
Trade	17.3	15.6	16.2
Finance and Insurance	3.0	3.1	3.3
Service	40.9	29.0	40.3
Other	4.5	2.6	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

One major reason behind the service sector's predominance was the city's ability to attract generous governmental institutions as a result its voters' political savvy and tendency to elect cabinet ministers at both the provincial and federal level.⁵⁰ Kingston's workforce was highly concentrated in the service sector when compared to the workforces found in other Ontario cities of similar size.

TABLE 3.4.
PERCENTAGE OF LABOR FORCE
EMPLOYED IN SERVICE INDUSTRY: 1951⁵¹

Oshawa	7.2
Peterborough	11.2
Sarnia	8.9
Kitchener	14.8
London	26.1
Kingston	40.1

Land assembly was to help stimulate the local economy by providing homes for well paid employees. This incentive was to make Kingston a desirable location for industries or service institutions to locate. In effect, the land assembly program was to accomplish economic and social ends. Butterhill Farm was the first land assembly project attempted in Kingston.

3.5. BUTTERHILL FARM

In 1949, CMHC president David Mansur welcomed Queens Professor C. A. Curtis mayoralty re-election victory. He then contacted his provincial counterparts and suggested that Kingston be a test site for the new land assembly program.⁵² Premier Frost agreed and invited Mayor Curtis to Queens Park for a meeting concerning land assembly.⁵³ As a result of this meeting, the CMHC purchased a suitable tract of land, called Butterhill Farm, that was just north of Kingston's boundary.⁵⁴ Shortly afterwards the necessary agreements were signed by the respective participants and the project was apparently ready to proceed.⁵⁵ Several factors prevented the Butterhill Farm project from ever being completed despite its promising start. City officials concluded that the \$163,000 outlay needed to construct a pumphouse and to supply services up to the site's edge was too expensive.⁵⁶ Kingston had to annex the site from Kingston Township. The process was potentially prolonged and tedious because relations between the neighbors were not always cordial.⁵⁷ For these reasons, the senior governments agreed with Mayor Curtis's request to abandon the project.⁵⁸

Fortunately for the parties involved, Alcan was planning to expand its plant and expressed an interest in the site. This was a welcome proposition for Kingston City Council because an expanded plant equalled more jobs and potentially more taxes.⁵⁹ By re-selling the land, the two senior governments could recoup their original losses. In 1955, without calling for public tenders, the CMHC sold Alcan 79 acres of the 123 acre site.⁶⁰ This secrecy ran contrary to open market principles and we might conclude that a very comfortable relation existed between the public sector and the multi-national company. On all subsequent occasions, public tenders were called and potential customers bid on the land. Eventually, various customers bought the remaining portions of the farms, with Alcan purchasing the remaining property.⁶¹

Butterhill Farm became part of the city's effort to establish a suitably secluded industrial park for clean, light, and modern industries.⁶² The area's proximity to railways and major roadways made it an ideal location for this use.⁶³ Understandably, this was a case of the city's industrial needs taking precedence over its social welfare ones. Ironically, Alcan's expansion worsened Kingston housing problem because more employees moved to the city.⁶⁴ The site was isolated from other residential areas and was a poor site for a subdivision. The Butterhill Farm incident demonstrated the power of Alcan, a dominant economic elite in comparison to the local commercial-civic elite. The multi-national corporation was able to purchase a substantial portion of the land without even bothering with political niceties such as open

tenders.

3.6 ANNEXATION

With the failure of the Butterhill Farm initiative, the local authorities changed their tactics, but retained their objective of bringing prosperity to the municipality. Mayor Curtis reasoned that the city needed to control an urban area large enough to construct a comprehensive and integrated infrastructure which would attract industry.⁶⁵ Similarly, City Council was worried that the fast growing Kingston Township was overtaking Kingston and becoming the area's dominant rival.⁶⁶ Accordingly, Alcan and Canadian Industries Limited, two modern industrial plants, located respectively to the North and West of Kingston's borders, were City Council's main targets. Annexation was the chosen weapon.

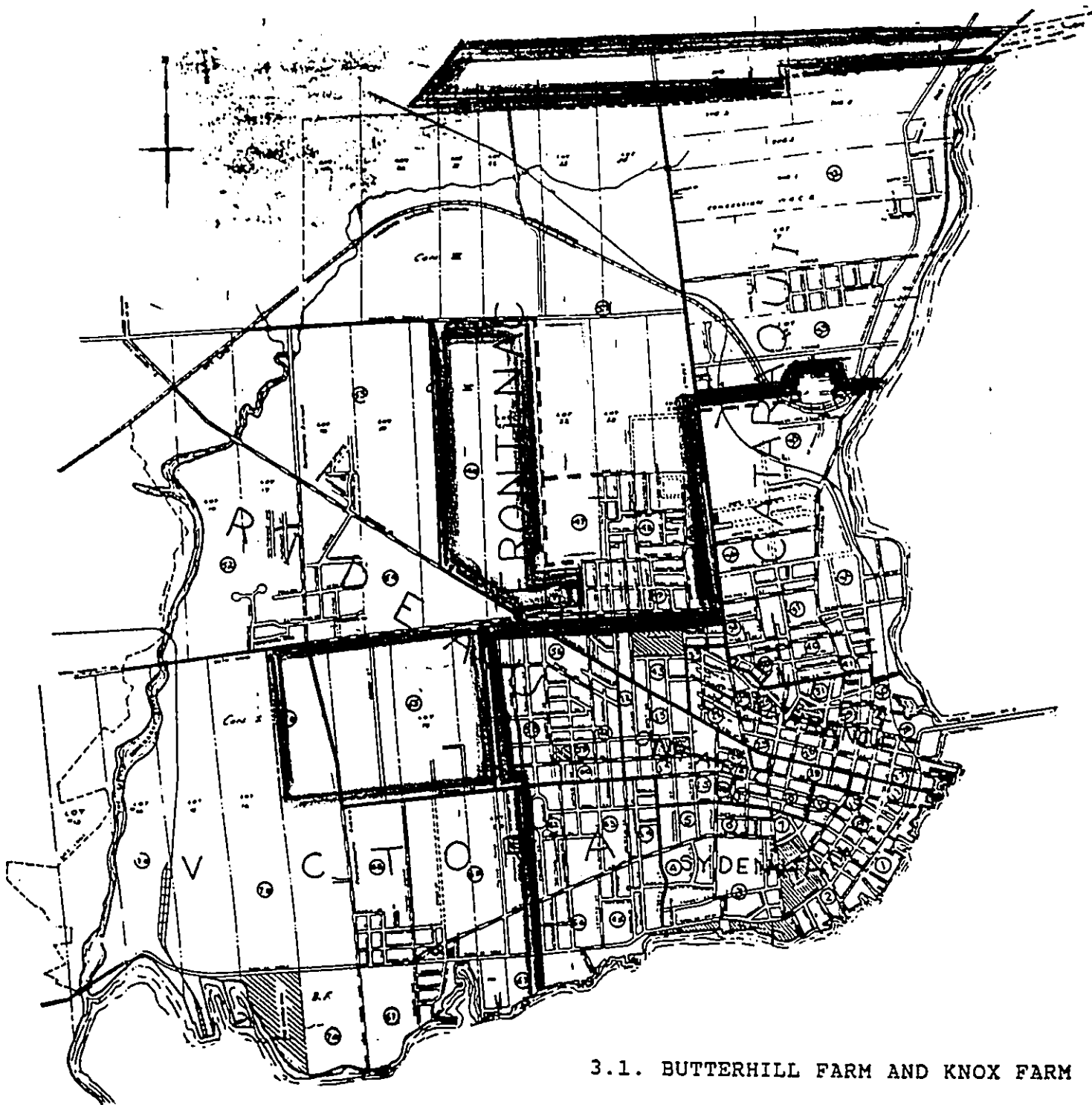
Worried about their economic base being undermined, Kingston Township challenged Kingston's annexation bid. Between December 1950 and January 1951, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), an officially impartial board responsible for mediating city planning disputes, listened to both sides of the annexation dispute and weighed the evidence.⁶⁷ OMB Chairman Lorne Cummings announced the Board's verdict on January 24, 1951. Kingston received the Alcan Plant to the north. The city's western border was also extended. However, it was not extended far enough to encompass the CIL plant.⁶⁸ Kingston was given some other additions which were of dubious quality such as Rideau Heights, a run-down residential area located near the northeastern section of the city. In other words, while the city gained nearly ten thousand residents, it was not

given the corresponding industrial tax base to help accommodate them.⁶⁹ City officials were not enthusiastic about the verdict and tried unsuccessfully to have it overturned.⁷⁰

Theoretically, Kingston City Council could have appealed the OMB decision to the Ontario Cabinet.⁷¹ However, this course would have been futile because Premier Frost was wary of hostile annexations' political ramifications. For instance, during the formation of the Metropolitan Toronto between 1950-1953, Frost balanced the interests of Toronto businessmen and politicians who wanted to annex the suburbs against those of the suburban elites whom desired to maintain their autonomy.⁷² Metropolitan government was a compromise engineered to partially satisfy these demands. Officially the premier was merely a neutral onlooker during the proceedings that led up to the OMB's final verdict. In reality, Premier Frost and OMB Chairman Lorne Cummings were in close contact and not surprisingly, they found the final verdict to be satisfactory.⁷³ During Kingston/Kingston Township episode similar considerations were probably taken into account because alienating the rapidly expanding Kingston Township was not a sound political move.

3.7. KNOX FARM

After the failed annexation attempt, Mayor Curtis was defeated by George Wright in a sometimes acrimonious 1952 municipal election.⁷⁴ As with most mayors, political and economic realities left Wright with only a few options to select. Supplying city builders with serviced land naturally became one of Wright's top



3.1. BUTTERHILL FARM AND KNOX FARM

-  Butterhill Farm
-  Knox Farm
-  Penitentiary Farm
-  Alcan Corporation
-  City Limits: Pre-1952 Annexation

MAP
CITY OF KINGSTON: 1957

priorities and, as with his predecessor, he turned to land assembly.

In 1953, the almost two hundred acres Knox Farm, located just north of Highway 401, was offered for sale by its owner.⁷⁵ In an effort to seize the moment, Wright presented a motion in City Council that requested the two senior governments to begin a land assembly project on the site. After a great deal of deliberation, the resolution was sent to the finance committee for further study. Again, the aldermen were concerned about the capital costs that the venture would necessitate.⁷⁶ A year later, the motion re-surfaced and the aldermen voted eleven to ten not to follow through with the project.⁷⁷ Knox Farm became one of Kingston's most politically divisive issues during the 1950's and the political battle outstripped the site's actual worth.

The advocates of Knox Farm were an unlikely alliance of the city social activists and real estate interests. On one hand, Reverend T. H. Good reasoned that Knox Farm was a valuable source of much needed inexpensive housing.⁷⁸ On the other hand, business interests clearheadedly regarded the enterprise as a source of cheap land to build profitable houses on. Predictably, the Kingston Builders Exchange, a consortium of local construction firms, encouraged City Council to proceed with the project.⁷⁹ The Chamber of Commerce entered the fray and voiced comparable views.⁸⁰ Recognizing the public relations advantages that a flourishing land assembly project would offer, federal and provincial officials also loudly criticized City Council for their apparent inertia.⁸¹

The municipality's only newspaper, The Whig Standard did not even pretend to be a neutral recorder of events during the Knox Farm episode. Its proprietor A. L. Davis, who also owned the local television and radio station, ardently berated City Council in his editorials and touted Knox Farm as being a solid response to Kingston's housing plight.⁸² Davis's interest in Knox Farm was not exclusively altruistic. He was an active member of the Chamber of Commerce, and understandably he agreed with the organization's outlook.⁸³ Davies was a businessman. Builders customarily purchased advertising space in the Whig Standard and, hence, their accounts were notable sources of revenue.⁸⁴ Furthermore, more houses meant more families which in turn meant an increased circulation for the newspaper. In effect, the viewpoint of the city's media was almost identical to those of the commercial-civic elites. This secure affiliation brings into question the pluralism of opinion available to Kingston's residents during the 1950's.⁸⁵

The bloc opposing Knox Farm asserted that the site was isolated and its development costs would outstrip its value.⁸⁶ Alderman Benjamin Allmark, who later became Kingston's Conservative representative in John Diefenbaker's regime, perceptively explained that only middle income buyers could afford a house on Knox Farm.⁸⁷ He recognized, perhaps unwittingly, the land assembly program's basic flaw: it could not supply low cost housing. Nevertheless, his appraisal was soon overlooked.

Disgruntled by City Council's inactivity, Kingston's provincial representative W. M. Nickle apparently spurred his

federal counterpart W. J. Henderson into approaching senior governments and suggest that they purchase Knox Farm for later use.⁸⁸ Senior CMHC officials were not delighted by the proposal and carefully deliberated before they reached a resolution. The CMHC was rapidly losing patience with the vacillating Kingston City Council. Similarly, the project was expected to be expensive because of the site's isolated location. Despite the shortcomings, the endeavor had its merits. The Ontario Department of Planning and Development was in the process of acquiring vacant land throughout the province in an effort to create an accumulative land bank. Purchasing Knox Farm would have been a sound intergovernmental cooperative and diplomatic manoeuvre. Kingston suffered from a severe housing problem mainly caused by a dearth of serviced land. A CMHC observer noted that this plight was especially harsh in the city's northern area and a subdivision could alleviate some of the strain.⁸⁹ David Mansur and later the DPD eventually agreed with the evidence and went ahead with the purchase.⁹⁰

The Kingston electorate strongly endorsed Mansur's decision by voting out six Knox Farm detractors in the 1954 municipal election.⁹¹ Wright appointed four new members, all were Knox Farm supporters, to the finance committee. This was an unprecedented stratagem because membership of finance committee, referred to as the "inner cabinet", customarily remained stable.⁹² Being a seasoned politician, Wright patiently set about convincing the rookie aldermen of Knox Farm's worth before he made took a decisive

step. Accordingly, he appointed a commission to study city housing conditions and make recommendations.⁹³

Finally in 1956, City Council requested the two senior governments to undertake a land assembly project on the Knox Farm site. The project was to consist of a fifty unit subdivision along with a fifty unit rental project. This dual purpose approach represented the Knox Farm supporters' somewhat divergent backgrounds.⁹⁴ During the same session, City Council invited the federal and provincial governments to begin a similar endeavor on a tract near the city's western border named Penitentiary Farm.⁹⁵ Annexing Knox Farm was apparently the only remaining detail before work could begin. A lawyer representing Kingston Township assured the CMHC that his client did not consider the farm to be valuable and hence would not interfere with the proceedings.⁹⁶

According to the land assembly program's procedures, government officials needed to carefully inspect the site before labor could start.⁹⁷ In February, two CMHC administrators visited Knox Farm and concluded that an interesting subdivision could be built on the somewhat rocky terrain.⁹⁸ After City Council had passed its resolution and became formally committed to the project, the CMHC conducted an airborne survey of the farm. After analysing the results, the CMHC concluded that the land could not be developed because it was too rocky.⁹⁹ DPD officials concurred with their federal counterpart's conclusion, but, did not formally announce the cancellation until December, 1956.¹⁰⁰ The long delay implied that the two governments were both trying to save some

face. Nonetheless, the news did not shatter the City Council's morale because the project's termination handily coincided with the opportunity to substantially expand the Penitentiary Farm project.¹⁰¹ In short, all the Knox Farm bargaining and tribulations were in vain. The Penitentiary Farm project softened the blow of its discontinuation.

3.8 CONCLUSION

During the 1950's Kingston was a stratified city with a commercial-civic elite controlling the major decision making apparatus which distributed the opportunities to attain public goods. Nevertheless, the commercial-civic elite was not a solid unitary bloc. Instead, it was an affiliation of individuals drawn from comparable backgrounds. The elections demonstrated that while particular actors circulated in and out of the political arena, the local power structure perpetuated itself. The land assembly program snugly fit into this configuration, as each section of the commercial-civic elite supported the two projects for various reasons. In the end, especially during the Knox Farm episode, the land assembly's performance was hampered by its democratic overtones, albeit in a democracy that had few participants. These incidents indicated the pitfalls of intergovernmental relations that involved all levels of federalism. Subsequent land assembly projects in Kingston suffered from the same ingrained inefficiency, which caused a considerable amount of embarrassment for all the parties involved.

ENDNOTES

1. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation "Procedure on Federal Provincial Matters as Between Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation Ontario Regional Office and Housing Branch of the Department of Planning and Development, December 1956." Unpublished Report, RG 56, Vol. 133, Public Archives of Canada (Hereafter PAC).
2. Kenneth Crawford, Canadian Municipal Government, (Toronto: University Press, 1954) 6.
3. Ibid. 7 and William W. Bennett, American Influences on Canadian Government (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, 1929) 102.

Unlike the federal and provincial governments, power in the municipal government was not concentrated in the executive. For instance, in Kingston, the votes of the mayor and the aldermen carried equal weight and value. Similarly, the mayor could not make committee appointments without Ontario cabinet approval. "Municipal Government in Kingston and the Area", Unpublished Report, 1966: 2. See also Paul Hickey, Decision-Making Processes in Ontario's Local Governments (Toronto: Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs, 1973).

In contrast, during the 1950's the Ontario cabinet was becoming increasingly organized, coordinated and effective. Consequently, power was steadily being drawn away from the electorate and towards an inner circle free from accountability. F. F. Schindler, Responsible Government in Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969) 272.
4. Robert Dahl, one of the leading proponents of the pluralist school of thought, explained that politics in a liberal society was essentially a sideshow because true power came from the ground-level upwards and not the other way around. Robert Dahl, Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1961) 305.
5. See Thomas Plunkett, The Financial Structure and Decisionmaking Process in Canadian Municipal Government (Ottawa: Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1972) 2.
6. Taken from Mighty Kingston City Directory: 1954-1960. Occupational classifications were taken from Richard Harris, "The City Directory and the Measurement of Social Class," Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics, 1965-1970 (Kingston/Montreal: McGill and Queen's University

Press, 1988) 157-161.

7. Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics, 1965-1970 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) 46.
As Gaetonio Mosca noted, taxes frequently squeeze middle class elements the hardest; consequently, they are likely to seek public office. Gaetonio Mosca, The Ruling Class, trans. Hannah P. Kahn and ed. Arthur Livingston (New York: McGraw Hill Book Inc., 1939) 270.
8. During the 1950 municipal election two Queen's professors became aldermen, one became mayor and two others joined the Board of Education. "Gown in Kingston Town," The Queen's Review, Vol 24. No. 9. December 9, 1950: 5.
9. While no data exists for the late 1950's, in 1976 less than thirty per cent of the manufacturing plants that employed fewer than fifty people were organized. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 37.
10. Until 1960, only those Kingston residents who were over the age of twenty-one and owned \$400.00 or more worth of real property could participate in elections either as candidates or voters. "By-Law Results No Surprise," Kingston Whig Standard, December 4, 1960: 13.
11. This pattern was unique because a ward in most cities were combinations of working and middle class residents. Michael Ircha, "The Allocation of Public Goods and Services," Master's Thesis, Queen's University 1973: 52.
12. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 62.
13. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1961: Population and Characteristics by Census Tracts, Kingston Ontario (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics. 1963) 6-7.
14. Gordon Stephenson and George Muirhead, A Planning Study of Kingston, Ontario (Kingston: Corporation of the City of Kingston, 1961) 24-25.
15. "By-law Results No Surprise," Kingston Whig Standard, December 4, 1960: 13. (Hereafter KWS).
Even after the franchise was extended, less than half of those eligible actually cast their vote. The reasons behind the voter apathy were not clear, however, cynical resignation would be an apt description. "Percentage Set at 54.7," KWS December 4, 1960: 13.

16. Henry Kitchen and Melville L. McMillan, "Local Government in Canadian Federalism," in Intergovernmental Relations ed. Richard Simeon (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1985) 236.

The pressures of urbanization such as repairing the wear on city street caused by the proliferation of automobiles, were too costly for the revenues that property taxes generated. Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, Puppets on a Shoestring: The Effects on Municipal Government of Canada's System of Public Finance (Ottawa, Canadian Federation of Mayor and Municipalities, 1976) 25.
17. Crawford, Canadian Municipal Government, 6 and 191 and Alan F. J. Artibise, A Matter of Political Responsibility: Real Property Assessment (Winnipeg: University of Winnipeg, Institute of Urban Studies, 1985) 11.
18. Warren Magnusson, "Introduction," in City Politics in Canada eds. Warren Magnusson and Andrew Sancton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) 12.
19. Ontario Department of Municipal Affairs, Annual Report of Municipal Statistics, 1951, 1961 (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1951, 1961).
20. Lawrence Charles, "The Effectiveness of the Official Plan in the Development of an Area: A Case Study of the City of Kingston: 1959-1971," Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1975, 31.
21. Ibid., 31.
22. For instance, the Ontario Municipal Board, and governmental agency charged with overseeing boundaries and other such matters, approved the city wards border. Crawford, Canadian Municipal Government, 83.
23. C.A. Curtis, "Special Survey of Housing in the City of Kingston: 1947" cited in Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 31.
24. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 31.
25. "'Bad as Worst in Canada" Reverend T. H. Good Declares" Kingston Whig Standard, (Hereafter KWS) September 1955: 31.
26. Albert Rose, "Dr. Albert Rose Address to the Special Committee on Housing, City Council of Kingston: Feb. 12, 1956," City of Kingston Records. Queen's University Archives (Hereafter QUA)

27. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1961: Summary of Housing Characteristics (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1963).
25. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1961: Population and Characteristics by Census Tracts, Kingston, Ontario (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1963) 6, 8.
The percentage of the a family's budget devoted to rent depended on their income. In the lower tiers, families spend a higher percentage of their income on rent. See Allan Moscovitch, "Housing: Who Pays? Who Profits?," Inequality: Essays on the Political Economy of Social Welfare (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981). 324-325.
26. Nebo Orazietti, "The Changing Structure of the House Building Industry in Kingston, Ontario: 1961-1976," Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1979: 2.
27. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 35.
28. Between the academic years of 1960/1961 and 1965/1966 the school's studentry increased by over a half from around three thousand to approximately four thousand eight hundred David Mclay, "Survey of Enrolment and Student Housing at Queen's University," Housing Demands and Housing Policy ed. M. J. Goldsmith (Kingston: Institute of Local Government, Queen's University, 1972).
29. John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) 183-185. Porter based his conclusions on data generated by Dominion Bureau of Statistics, University Student Expenditure and Income in Canada, 1956-1957 (Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1959).
30. Muirhead and Stephenson, A Planning Study of Kingston, 40.
31. For instance just over a tenth of the houses in these two wards need major repairs in comparison to the citywide rate of just under five percent. D. B. S. Population and Housing Characteristics by Census Tracts: Kingston, 6-7 and Muirhead and Stephenson, A Planning Study of Kingston, 39, 41.
32. Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 82.
33. In 1965, the largest landholding organization was the Abramsky with almost fifty units foiled closely by John Hewitt(37), Marcus Family (30), Anglin Company (26) and Magistrate Garvin (30). A similar study does not exist for the 1950's, however it can safely be assumed that the major landholders were in the process of consolidating their

holdings. Compiled by Joan Newman in 1967 and cited by Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 180.

34. Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 38.
35. Oraziotti, "The Changing Structure of the House Building Industry and its Performances in Kingston", 101.
36. "Henderson Reviews Housing Situation: Emphasizes Need For City Council Action Now," KWS January 4, 1956: 17.
For example, 175 units were constructed in 1955. "New Homes Record Low in Kingston," KWS May 4, 1956: 17.
37. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "Availability of Land For Residential Constriction, 1953," RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
Meanwhile, the newly forming Kingston Township had ample supplies of serviced land and were attracting builders away from the city. J. V. Poapst, Letter to A. E. Coll, June 21, 1955. RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
38. For an example from the 1950's W. H. Clark, "Goals for a Community Builder," Community Planning Review, II. 4. 1952: 96-99.
39. Kingston appointed an Industrial Commissioner in the 1920's whose responsibility was coordinating the purchase of land for industrial use, offering bonuses for newly located businesses, and other similar incentives. Brian S. Osbourne and Donald Swainson, Kingston: Building on the Past (Westport: Butternut Press Inc., 1988) 220. See Stewart Fyfe, Municipal Assistance to Location of Industry (Halifax: Institute of Public Affairs, 1961).
40. Location has always been a vital consideration for industrial growth. James Lorimer, The Developers (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company 1978, 151.
41. The Kingston Shipyards was one of the most prominent of the waterfront industries. The deep draught ships using the seaway were simply too large for Kingston Harbour and gradually the shipyard lost its business and was forced to close. Swainson and Osbourne, Kingston: Building on the Past, 240. For the condition of industrial lands. Kingston Industrial Commission, "Kingston, Ontario, Canada: Presents Your Industrial Site," Unpublished Report, 1967, Kingston Public Library (KPL).
42. W. T. Mills, Letter to R. L. Mersey, August 30, 1963. QUA.

43. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 34.
As Frederick Jaher pointed out, elites exerted their influence by relying on legitimacy, a delicate balance of community deference and sufferance and a prudent distance from day to day events. The Urban Establishment: The Upper Strata in Boston, New York, Charleston, Chicago and Los Angeles (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982) 5.
44. For an American perspective of corporate\community relations see Roland Pellergrin and Charles H. Coales, "Absentee Owned Corporation and Community Power Structure," The Structure of Community Power eds. Michael Aiken and Paul C. Mort (New York: Random House, 1970) 170-179.
45. Stephenson and Muirhead, A Planning Study of Kingston, Ontario, 24-25.
46. Queen's salaries and expenses for all academic and support staff for 1957 was nearly three million dollars. This was a substantial sum to be injected into the community. England, Leonard, MacPherson & Co., The Treasurers Report For the Year Ended June 30, 1957, Kingston, Queen's University, 1957) 137.
47. During the mid-1960's there was great deal of tension between Queen's University and City Council because of the university's property acquisition practises. In order to ease tensions. a City-University liaison committee was established in 1967. "Report of City-Liaison Committee, February 10, 1967," Queen's University Senate Office Records, Queen's University Archives.
48. Board of Trustees, Report to the Salaries Committee: May 17, 1962 (Kingston: Queen's University, 1962) 275.
49. Gordon Stephenson and George Muirhead, A Planning Study of Kingston, Ontario: 1960 (Kingston: Corporation of the City of Kingston, 1961) 24.
50. One of the latest examples has been the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) MacDonald-Cartier building constructed in 1983. Until governments undergo drastic cutbacks, this strategy appears to be a very sound one. Osbourne and Swainson, Kingston: Building on the Past, 304-305.
51. Ibid., 24.
For Ontario's changing economic makeup see: Vernon Lang, The Service State Emerges: Ontario, 1945-1973 (Toronto: Ontario Economic Council, 1977), K. J. Rea The Prosperous Years (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985) and D. R. Richmond, The Evolution of Economic Policy (Toronto: Ontario Economic Council, 1977).

52. "Kingstonians Return C. A. Curtis as Mayor," KWS Dec 7, 1948: 1 and David Mansur, Letter to A. E. K. Bunnell, Dec. 30, 1949. RG 56, Vol. 132, PAC.
53. "Low Cost Housing Plan For Kingston Discussed," KWS Feb. 9, 1950: 15.
54. "Butterhill Farm, Kingston 1/50, September 12, 1963," RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
55. R.S. Cross, Letter to H. C. Linkletter, Oct., 1954, RG 56, Vol. 171. PAC.
56. A. E. Bunnell, Letter to C. C. Wyatt, Aug. 7, 1950. Clerk Controller Files. QUA.
57. "Questions and Answers on Land Assembly," KWS Aug. 7, 1954: 3.
58. Ibid. 3.
59. See William T. Mills, Letter to R. L. Mersey, Aug 30, 1963. QUA.
60. "Butterhill Farm, Kingston 1/50, September 12, 1963," RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
61. In one case, Nesbitt Motors outbid Alcan for a seven acre site. Ibid.
62. Lorimer, The Developers, 151.
63. Stephenson and Muirhead, A Planning Study of Kingston, 1960, 63 and Charles, "The Effectiveness of the Official Plan in the Development of an Area," 83.
64. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation? "Site Investigation for a Land Assembly Project, 1953," QUA.
65. C. A. Curtis, "The Changing Form of Municipal Government," Habitat 2. 2. Jan-Feb 1959: 16.
Curtis's reasoning was not unique and was probably as old as local government itself. Warren Magnusson, "Metropolitan Reform in the Capitalist City," Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique XIV. 3. September/septembre 1981: 560.
66. Lawrence Charles, "The Effectiveness of the Official Plan in the Development of an Area: A Case Study of the City of Kingston 1959-1971," Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1975: 34.

67. Romaine Ross, Local Government in Ontario (Toronto: Canada Law Book Company, 1962) 13 and "Partial Annexation is Allowed by the Board: Nylon Plant Stays Outside of Limits," KWS Jan. 24, 1951: 1.
68. This additional tract was classified as "deficit land" because it needed to be developed but lacked any revenue sources to finance the work. Ibid.
69. Brian S. Osborne and Donald Swainson, Kingston: Building on the Past (Westport: Butternut Press, 1988) 306.
70. "Kingston Loses Out in Annexation Rehearing," KWS Feb 9: 1.
71. Ted Gomme, "Residential Planning in Ontario," Plan Ontario 24 3/4 Dec. 1984: 108.
72. Larry Kulisek and Trevor Price, "Ontario Municipal Policy Affecting Local Autonomy: A Case Study of Involving Windsor and Toronto," Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine XVI. 3. February/fevrier 1988: 265.
73. Ibid. 266 and Roger Graham, Old Man Ontario: Leslie M. Frost (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 200-205.
74. Wright was a retired Civil Engineer, lifelong Kingston resident and mayor 1930, "Voter's Elect New Mayor: Reject Sunday Sports," KWS Dec 2, 1952: 1.
The campaign was a classic confrontation between a "booster" and a "cutter". The "booster", Curtis, advocated constructing a new sewage plant in Pittsburgh Township and financing the effort by raising taxes. The "cutter", Wright, argued that far less costly options were available and taxes should be lowered. The inevitable financial pressures forced City Council to raise taxes. Likewise the City Council eventually ordered the sewage disposal plant built because of the increasing strain on the city's existing sewage system. R. J. Ellis, "Death of Mayor George Wright Removes One of Kingston's Most Active Citizens," KWS Oct. 9, 1956 17 and Murray Hogben, "Open House to Discuss Sewage Plant Set For November 9," KWS Nov 1, 1989: 35.
75. "Mayor Wright Answers Questions on Land Assembly Scheme for Housing Here," KWS Sept 12, 1953.
76. Ibid.
77. "11-10 Recorded Vote Kills Housing Proposal," KWS Aug 30, 1954: 1-2.
78. Ibid. 1, 2.

79. "Want Action by Council on Housing KWS, April 27, 1953: 13.
80. "T. A. Andre Says Housing Need Now," KWS April 27, 1953.
81. See "Honourable Robert Winters Reviews Housing Problems in Canada," KWS April 9, 1953: 13.
82. See "Kingston and Low Rental Housing," KWS April 2, 1953.
83. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 47.
84. See Donald Higgins, Urban Canada: Its Government and Politics (Toronto MacMillan of Canada, 1977) 221-222.
85. See Porter, The Vertical Mosaic 157.
86. "11-10 Recorded Vote Kills Housing Proposal," KWS Aug 31, 1954: 1,2.
87. Ibid. 1, 2.
88. W. J. Henderson, Letter to D. Mansur, Sept 28, 1954. RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
Using extrapolation, it appears that Nickle took the lead in this particular case because municipalities were squarely within provincial jurisdictional control. Nickle's political star was also rising; the following year Frost appointed him to cabinet. Accordingly a worthwhile project in his own riding would have only enhanced his reputation. Finally, during subsequent land assembly negotiations Nickles persistently intervened in the proceedings and evidently did so without consulting his own staff which caused a great deal of confusion. See Graham, Old Man Ontario, 308-310.
89. A. B. Taylor, Memorandum, Oct 14, 1954, RG 56, Vol. 171. PAC.
90. D. B. Mansur, Letter to H. W. Hignett, Oct 20, 1954. RG 56, Vol. 171. PAC and "The Knox Farm Purchase," KWS Oct 28, 1954.
91. Kingston City Council Minutes, January and February 1954.
92. "Committee Heads Named for Council," KWS Dec 30, 1954: 1.
93. Wright named non-council members to the commission to give it a broader view of the situation. Muirhead and Stephenson, A Planning Study of Kingston, V.
As Floyd Hunter cynically observed in Atlanta during the 1950s' the community elite were accustomed to setting up

studies but very little actual action occurred. He concluded that the principle of keeping taxes low outweighs the principle of raising taxes to meet the real demands for better conditions for welfare recipients. Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953) 243.

94. "Land Assembly Plans Passed: Anti-Knox Bloc Fails to Curb Two-Way Project," KWS May 29, 1956:1.
95. Ibid. 1.
96. J. McCullough, Letter to A. E. Coll, July 30, 1956. RG 56, Vol. 171. PAC.
97. "Procedure on Federal-Provincial Matters as Between Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation Ontario Regional Office and Housing Branch of the Department of Planning and Development, December 1956," RG 56, Vol. 133. PAC.
98. D. Ling, Letter to R. W. G. Card, Feb 24, 1956. RG 56 Vol. 133. PAC.
99. J. McCullough, Letter to A. E. Coll, July 30, 1956. RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
100. "Knox Farm Land Assembly Found to be Unsound," KWS December 28, 1956.
101. Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR: POLSON PARK AND CALVIN PARK

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Kingston attained its first successful land assembly projects between 1954 and 1957. Two adjoining plots of federally and provincially owned land became the sites of well-groomed middle income neighborhoods named Polson Park and Calvin Park. Only a select portion of the population could purchase lots and single detached houses in these exclusive subdivisions. Because of the city's lack of inward migration, it can be concluded that the majority of the residents in these new neighborhoods probably moved in from other sections of the city.¹ During the same period, the intergovernmental public housing program produced seventy-one residential units for low income families which was barely enough to satisfy the demand for affordable housing.² In other words, the state subsidized middle income homeowners and offered a minimal amount of assistance to low income tenants.

4.2. POLSON PARK

In 1954, Kingston City Council formally requested the federal and provincial governments to undertake a land assembly project on a slice of the Penitentiary Farm which was owned by the Federal Ministry of Justice.³ Municipal officials had long looked covetously upon this sizable parcel of agricultural land within Kingston's boundaries. In 1955, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) purchased a substantial piece of the farm along with a plot belonging to the Provincial Department of Health for \$63,040 or \$1,000 per acre.⁴ Approximately \$802,550 was spent to

complete this project; the CMHC paid three quarters of the total and provincial government handled the remaining portion. The outlay covered work done on the subdivision ranging from legal fees to building sidewalks and roads.⁵ The municipal governments contributed \$19,000 to pay for the services leading up the project. These expenditures could be recovered from general taxes and the lots' selling prices.⁶

A minor skirmish between the CMHC and the Kingston Public Utilities Corporation (PUC) concerning size of easements marred the otherwise painless process of completing Polson Park. Easements are pieces of land used for necessary services such as sewers or water lines. Customarily, the CMHC complied with any local utility's company's request for these. In this case, the CMHC considered the PUC's easement request to be unreasonable.⁷ After a brief stalemate, the CMHC complied with the PUC's request before the operation became unnecessarily complicated.⁸

On April 27, 1957, the CMHC offered Polson Park's 228 lots for sale on the open market.⁹ Lots were sold to individual buyers at prices ranging from \$1,375 to \$1,450 depending on location in the subdivision. Professional corporate builders paid an additional \$800.00 surcharge which was refundable if they did not mark up the lot price excessively when the house was sold. This safeguard was to protect the consumer against excessive speculation.¹⁰ On the average, the area's private development firms charged \$2,500 for an unserviced lot in 1957; in contrast, Polson Park's lots were much cheaper. Even so, only a select portion of the local populace

could afford to purchase a lot and a house to put on it.¹¹

Within the CMHC hierarchy, officials were well aware of the dearth of benefits that the program offered for the masses. For instance, in 1957, a CMHC administrator, J. S. Hodgson, questioned the project's logic of essentially subsidizing middle income homeowners.¹² His doubts were not completely isolated. During the same year, Stewart Bates, the crown corporation's president since succeeding Mansur in 1954, privately expressed similar reservations about the CMHC's policies.¹³ This criticism did not change the crown corporation's direction. Bates was rebuked by a member of the Board of Directors for his suggestion. This circle of Liberal government appointees was where the real power lay in the corporate hierarchy. According to official doctrine, economic and urban development requirements, not social welfare concerns, were the basis for the corporation's policies.¹⁴ Bates met with continual frustration throughout his presidency which lasted until his death in 1964.¹⁵

Initially, Kingstonians' enthusiasm for the lots was tepid because there as still some stigma attached to anything resembling public housing; even lots produced for the middle income homebuyer.¹⁶ This stigma soon wore off and by 1960, all of the lots were sold.¹⁷ Encouraged by the results, City Council resolved to undertake another land assembly project which would become Calvin Park.

4.3.1. CALVIN PARK

Early in 1957, rumors circulated suggesting that the Federal

Department of Justice was preparing to sell the Penitentiary Farm's remaining two hundred acres.¹⁸ Mayor Frank Boyce visited the CMHC branch office and expressed the city's interest in the land.¹⁹ City Planner, George Muirhead, anticipating the land's eventual availability, had already drawn up a plan for a proposed subdivision to be located on the site.²⁰ Finishing Polson Park was the top priority of the provincial and federal governments. Consequently, Boyce's enquiry did not launch a flurry of activity.

Early in 1959, the Department of Justice opened the Joyceville Penitentiary in a nearby community and no longer required the remaining portions of the Penitentiary Farm.²¹ Shortly afterwards, Kingston City Council formally requested the federal and provincial governments to undertake a land assembly project on the remaining portions of the Penitentiary Farm on January 27, 1959.²² At the same time, the Kingston Chapter of the YM-YWCA, searching for a plot of land to construct a new building, asked the Commissioner of Penitentiaries, General R. Gibson, for a six acre portion of the farm.²³ Throughout, Calvin Park's preparation process, the YM-YWCA's pursuit for the portion of land was a source of irritation and embarrassment for the governmental actors.

4.3.2. CALVIN PARK: PLANNING THE SUBDIVISION

Devising a plan for Calvin Park's subdivision was a source of disharmony between the various participants. Muirhead had already sketched a plan for the subdivision.²⁴ In the CMHC planners' version, Calvin Park was conceived as being an island with traffic flowing around its circumference.²⁵ The city planner was impressed

by this conception which followed the era's planning conventions.²⁶ Nonetheless, the fractious City Council ratified the final plan for the subdivision which was different from the one conceived by the CMHC and the city planner.²⁷

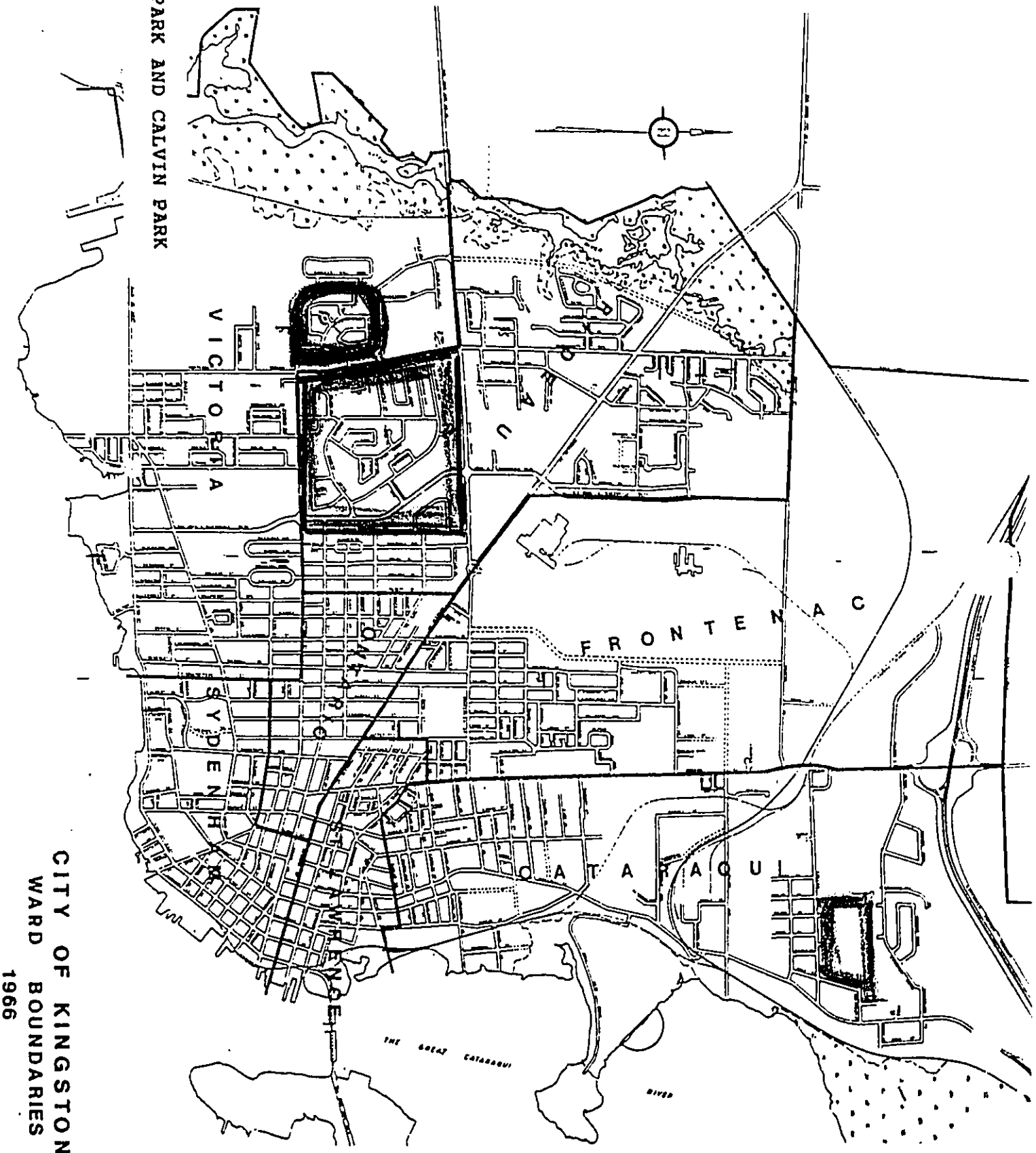
During the 1950's, the proliferating number of automobiles began to overburden Kingston's road system.²⁸ Kingston Traffic Engineer Ken Linesmen was concerned that if the CMHC version was executed, it would clog major traffic arteries leading into the city.²⁹ The Traffic and Streets Committee modified the CMHC plan so that an extended Avenue Road, later re-named Sir John A. Macdonald Boulevard, sliced Calvin Park into two.³⁰ Notwithstanding the calm objections of the CMHC and municipal planners, City Council approved the Traffic and Street Committee's rendition of Calvin Park in 1961.³¹

The inherent tensions between the disciplines of city planning and traffic engineering stalled Calvin Park's progression from first to final draft. On one hand, a city planner's foremost concern was a residential area's comfortable layout, preferably without heavy traffic violating its serenity. On the other hand, traffic engineer's primary interest was on the area's effect on the city's overall traffic movement.³² The gap was between the two professional disciplines was bridgeable. For instance, Calvin Park's Phase I took only a year longer to finish than did Polson Park. As the 1960's progressed, the relations between the disciplines became somewhat more cooperative.³³

On a broader scale, Calvin Park's postponement was symptomatic

4.1. POLSON PARK AND CALVIN PARK

- Polson Park
- Calvin Park
- Rideaucrest



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of Ontario municipal governments' decreasing effectiveness during the 1950's and 1960's. Property tax payers' expectations grew as the province's urban environments became more difficult to manage. In response to these pressures, municipal governments' began appointing committees to deal with various aspects of urban life ranging from parks to traffic.³⁴ The enlarged governmental machinery was to be a decisive instrument capable of tackling an assortment of problems. Citizens were to be encouraged to become involved in the democratic process.³⁵ However, as the number of committees grew, the municipal governments' efficiency declined, and the ponderous machinery began alienating citizens.³⁶ By the mid-1960's, five or more years were required to complete a subdivision.³⁷ Calvin Park essentially foreshadowed coming shifts in municipal government policies and practises. The Calvin Park project was practically destined to experience delays. The participants would not have been comforted by this knowledge because the YM-YWCA loudly protested each postponement.

4.3.3. SELLING LAND TO THE YM-YWCA

General R. Gibson, the Commissioner of Penitentiaries, initially passed the YM-YWCA's request for a six acre plot on to his superiors with his commendations. He cited the organization's valuable community services, its extensive public profile and its nearly \$1 million strong building fund.³⁸ The Minister of Justice, D. Fulton, shared Gibson's sentiments, but felt it was necessary to transfer the entire plot to CMHC so that a comprehensive plan could be properly prepared.³⁹

In February 1959, YM-YWCA executive Mrs. R. M. Billings informed the local press that the association was to soon receive its land. She graciously thanked the federal and provincial governments for their cooperation.⁴⁰ The local provincial representative W. M. Nickle, who was also the Minister of the Department of Planning and Development, had personally assured her about the land's immediate availability. The minister's declarations re-appeared in one of his 1959 election campaign advertisements which appeared in the Kingston Whig Standard.⁴¹ His calculated tactical move paid short term dividends because he was re-elected. Nevertheless, several complications prevented the YM-YWCA's tract from being ready for another two years. In the meantime, relations between the YM-YWCA and the governments grew decidedly frigid.

The local YM-YWCA's executive, unimpressed by the timelag between Nickle's 1959 promise and its actual implementation, issued an ultimatum in 1961. If the transaction was not soon completed, the association would begin construction on a roughly three acre plot of land that it had purchased earlier from the CMHC.⁴² Kingston YM-YWCA Director, Bruce Matthews issued an intriguing press release:

...Because of the "Y's" dedication to Christian principles we have stayed clear of any political entanglements. Perhaps we were wrong in this decision. Posterity will judge which political personalities have been engage for almost three years in a selfish clash of interests at the expense of thousands of boys and girls in the community.⁴³

Some junior CMHC officials were unamused by the undue scrutiny

that the corporation received during the incident and asked their superiors to issue a rebuttal. Appreciating the potential political repercussions of such an act, the senior officials, overruled the suggestion.⁴⁴ Such was the need to at least present the image of a unified front during an intergovernmental enterprise.

After a long delay the YM-YWCA was finally given the opportunity to purchase its land. However, the organization was not pleased with the price of the land. In 1959, Nickle promised that the six acre would be sold to the YM-YWCA at cost.⁴⁵ Customarily, governmental bodies sold land to each other without the price being increased; that is, it was sold at cost. The Department of Justice sold its 244 acres of land to the CMHC for \$450,000 or \$1,807 per acre in 1959.⁴⁶ In keeping with its commitment to free market principles, the CMHC declined to grant the YM-YWCA, a non-governmental body, special considerations. Instead, it had the land appraised, took into account the various service expenses incurred and set the price according to the area's market prices.⁴⁷ In 1961, the CMHC decided that the YM-YWCA would pay \$3,300 per acre.⁴⁸ Grudgingly, the association accepted this offer.

In an ideal world, city planning and public policy were executed without the contaminating influence of political gamesmanship. In reality, as the Calvin Park events revealed, politicians frequently intervened in the process in an effort to gain favorable exposure in the local media. Nickle's assorted

declarations were premature, miscalculated and caused a considerable amount of public relations damage. Nickle had a reputation of being energetic but somewhat undisciplined throughout his career. In this case, however, his poor timing was surprising because, as the DPD minister, he had access to all the relevant material concerning the negotiations and therefore should have foreseen any politically costly delays.⁴⁹

Calvin Park was an example of a public works project benefitting those who paid a heavy portion of the tax load. The YM-YWCA building was almost the only concession to the majority of Kingstonians unable to purchase one of the subdivision's houses. According to its egalitarian credo, the YM-YWCA never turned anyone away from its activities because of their race, creed, color or ability to pay.⁵⁰ Up to twenty-two females were offered emergency accommodation in the YM-YWCA's residences.⁵¹ The associations' edifice was snugly secluded in the subdivision's northern section and its traffic did not disturb the neighborhood's peaceful ambience.⁵² However, it is difficult to calculate how many impoverished citizens living in the northeastern wards were able to use the YM-YWCA facilities because of the city's expensive and inefficient transit system.⁵³ The true beneficiaries of Calvin Park were the select few capable of purchasing one of the lots. This occurrence can be rationalized because these middle income families were drawn from a group that were responsible for a heavy portion of the city's, the province's and the federal government's tax revenues.

4.3.4. THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF CALVIN PARK

Nickle outlined the land assembly program's aim in a 1959 letter to the Minister of Justice, David Fulton:

You will remember that one of the main purposes of land assembly is to make lots available to people in the lowest income brackets who might otherwise be unable to purchase a lot and build a house.⁵⁴

Being the Minister of Planning and Development, Nickle must have known that his statement was hollow. No aspect of the land assembly program, including setting lot prices, could be implemented without provincial compliance. Nor did his department oppose the price structuring of either Polson Park or Calvin Park.

Customers required a healthy annual income of at least \$5,350 before they could purchase a Calvin Park lot and put a house on top of it.⁵⁵ In 1961, roughly sixty five per cent of the city's population fell below this threshold.⁵⁶ Those Kingstonians capable of purchasing a home in Calvin Park found a neat and orderly suburban setting with nearby educational, recreational and other facilities. Provincial regulations stipulated that a genteel milieu would be fostered by allocating at least five per cent of a subdivision for parkland. Six per cent of Calvin Park's acreage was generously set aside for parkland.⁵⁷ With these amenities, lots in the new subdivision became a sought for prize.

During the night of October 24-25, 1962, eager customers anxiously lined up outside the CMHC office awaiting their chance to purchase one of Phase I's 228 lots.⁵⁸ Until Calvin Park's termination in 1966, its 368 single lots sold at a robust pace.⁵⁹ The subdivision also produced a tertiary benefit for those

purchasing lots in the Kingston area. In 1962, the Calvin Parks Phase I lots constituted approximately a quarter of the regional market share and forced competing private developers to lower their land prices. This advantage proved to be short lived.

Subsequent Calvin Park phases never constituted as substantial a percentage of the area's market as did the first phase. As a result, private concerns were not faced with stringent competition. They later raised their prices well above the rate of inflation to recoup their losses which they had incurred while the first phase's lots were on the market. In 1962, the average price of a lot in the area was \$1,859; in 1963 it had risen to \$2,594.⁶⁰ Analogously, the land assembly subdivision's price cuts were never deep enough to enable a broad spectrum of families to attain homeownership.⁶¹

4.4. CONCLUSION

During the Polson Park and Calvin Park episodes the exemplary values of fairness, participation and efficiency appeared to be absent as only a few politically relevant actors actively took part in the intergovernmental workings which produced choice middle income neighborhoods.⁶² These prime environs were the most comprehensive publicly funded housing ventures in the Kingston area during the 1950's and early 1960's. The offerings for the community's constituents with humble means were far less generous.

The state did not completely disregard Kingston's needy citizen's housing requirements during the 1950's and early 1960's. In 1959, the three governments constructed a seventy-one unit

rental project intended for families with monthly incomes of \$300 or less.⁶³ Rideau Heights, a much less fortunate area undergoing a redevelopment program during this period, was this project's location.⁶⁴ This project was a stopgap measure and the demand for low income housing continually outstripped the limited supply.⁶⁵ Calvin Park was to be the site for the next extensive public housing project.

In 1965, Calvin Park residents vigorously opposed and defeated the Ontario Housing Corporation bid to establish a 112 unit affordable housing complex in Calvin Park.⁶⁶ The area's inhabitants were galvanized by fears of devalued properties, increase taxes and overcrowded schools along with a prejudice against low income tenants.⁶⁷ The resistance confounded the OHC in 1965 and again in 1968.⁶⁸ Eventually, the OHC built the project in a less affluent and less resistant part of the city.⁶⁹ Calvin Park's entrenched neighborhood interests blocked an intergovernmental effort. The publicly planned and subsidized a middle income neighborhood had rejected its benefactors, the provincial and federal governments.⁷⁰

ENDNOTES

1. John Stanley Kirkland, "Housing Filtration in Kingston in Kingston: 1953-1969", Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1969: 101.
2. Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics 1965-1970 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) 43.
3. Kingston City Council Minutes, January 14, 1954: 45. (Hereafter CC.)
4. "Kingston 3/55: Basis of Calculations for Submissions to Executive. April 29, 1957," RG 56 Vol. 171. Public Archives of Canada (Hereafter PAC)
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. R. S. Cross, Letter to R. T. Ryan, Dec. 3. 1957. RG 56, Vol. 171. PAC.
8. J. McCullough, Letter to W. White, Nov. 28, 1957. RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
9. "Polson Park Really Taking Shape," Kingston Whig Standard July 19, 1958, (Hereafter KWS)
10. "Sale of Lots-Polson Park Land Assembly Project," RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC and Peter Spurr, "Five Land Banks", City Magazine 2. 1. March-April 1976: 12.
11. Spurr, "Five Land Banks," 11.
12. J. S. Hodgson, Letter to H. Hignett, May 3, 1957, RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
13. Michael Dennis and Susan Fish, Programs in Search of a Policy (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973) 293 and David Bacher, "Canadian Housing "Policy" in Perspective" Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine XV. 1. June/juin 1986.
14. Dennis and Fish, The Programs in Search of a Policy, 293 and Bacher, "Canadian Housing "Policy" in Perspective", 6.

15. Humphrey Carver, Compassionate Landscape (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975) 108 and Bacher, "Canadian Housing "Policy" in Perspective", 6.
16. George Muirhead, Interview, June 19, 1989.
17. George Muirhead and Gordon Stephenson, A Planning Study of Kingston, Ontario: 1960 (Kingston: Corporation of Kingston, 1961).
18. J. McCullough, Letter to A. E. Coll, Jan 8, 1957, RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. A. E. Coll, Letter to H. C. Linkletter, Jan 5, 1959. RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
22. "Kingston Penitentiary Lands", 1959? RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
23. R. B. Gibson, Letter to H. C. Linkletter, Jan. 5, 1959, RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
The Kingston YMCA, founded in 1854 or 1855, was one the oldest chapters in North America. The YWCA was established in 1885. The chapters amalgamated in 1955. "Amalgamation Thought Best of Local YM-YWCA," "Movement 118 Years Old in Kingston, "Y" One of the Oldest On Continent," and "Pioneered Innovations: YWCA Started Here in 1885," KWS Feb. 6, 1963: 25.
24. Muirhead, Interview, June 15, 1989.
25. Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation "Kingston Penitentiary Farm Sketch Plan, Sept. 22, 1960." Kingston Public Library.
26. See for instance "Subdivision Design-Good and Gimmicky," Ontario Planning 5. 8. Oct. 8, 1958: 1-7.
For Muirhead's reaction see George Muirhead, Letter to H. Collum, Feb. 22, 1960. RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
27. For the city planning procedure see Avro A. McMillan, "The Kingston Planning Board and Three Zoning Applications: A Case Study," Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1964.
28. Lawrence Charles, " The Effectiveness of the Official Plan in the Development of an Area: A Case Study of the City of Kingston, 1959-1971," Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1975: 164-167 and George Muirhead, "Planning For the Two

- Kingstons," Kingston 300: A Social Snapshot By Kingstonians ed. David B. Holmes (Kingston: Corporation of Kingston, 1973) 243-247.
29. See "YM-YWCA Here Wants Site For Building Settled," KWS Nov. 2, 1960: 1, 2.
30. "Lots in Calvin Park For Sale For \$1 750 to \$1850," KWS Oct. 24, 1962: 8.
31. CC Feb. 25, 1961: 72.
Despite disagreeing with the modified plan's basic principles, CMHC Planner Peter Dovell accepted, only warily, an invitation to defend his original plan at meeting of various city government departments in 1960. He was concerned that Calvin Park would only drag the CMHC into the costly and potentially never ending chore of trying to solve all of Kingston's traffic problems. Peter Dovell, Letter to CMHC Official, March 1, 1960, RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC and "Report of the Proceedings of Special Joint Meeting in the Planning Office at 8:00 p. m., Thursday, March the 24th, 1960," RG 56, Vol. 172. PAC.
32. See: "Professional Responsibility of City Planners and the Responsibility in Urban Transportation," Ontario Planning 8. 4. April-May, 1961: 1.
33. Muirhead, Interview, June 19, 1989.
34. J. Stefan Dupre, Intergovernmental Finance in Ontario: A Provincial-Local Perspective (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1968) 6.
35. Ibid. 6.
36. Ron Clark, "The Crisis in Canadian City Planning" City Magazine Jan-Feb 1976: 17-24 and Kent Gerecke, "The History of the Canadian City Planning" City Magazine Summer, 1976: 20.
37. Ontario Economic Council, Subject to Approval: A Review of Municipal Planning in Ontario ed. J. R. Bousfield (Toronto: Ontario Economic Council, 1973) 137.
38. R. B. Gibson, Letter to A. E. Coll, Jan. 8 1959. RG 56, Vol 172, PAC.
39. A. E. Coll, Letter to H. C. Linkletter, Jan. 5, 1959. RG 56, Vol. 172. PAC.
40. KWS Fed. 26, 1959.

41. See "There is No Substitute For Good Government: Nickle Gets Things Done..." KWS June 6, 1959: 21.
42. R. L. Mersey, Letter to Director of Urban Renewal & Public Housing Division, May 25, 1961. RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
43. "YM-YWCA Seeks Title," KWS May 17, 1961.
44. George Hunt, Letter to C. MacDiarmid, May 31, 1961. RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
45. "6 Acre Site Tickles Y Leaders," KWS May 30, 1959: 15.
46. CMHC had first made suitable concessions, including preparing an easement for the nearby Collins Bay Penitentiary before the transaction took place. "Kingston Penitentiary Lands," 1959? RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC. and R.E. Fowler, Letter to A. E. Coll, July 19, 1960. RG 56, 172, PAC.
47. R. L. Mersey, Letter to Director, Urban Renewal and Public Housing Division, May 25, 1961. RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
48. This price became the standard price of land sold to institutions in Calvin Park. A. E. Coll, Letter to Secretary of the Executive Committee, May 15, 1961. RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
49. In 1955, Premier Leslie Frost gave Nickle, his old Osgoode Law School classmate, the Department of Planning and Development portfolio. Nickle's decisiveness was frequently helpful, but also could be a hindrance. Roger Graham, Old Man Ontario: Leslie Frost (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 310.
50. See, Ian Robertson, "The "Y" as a People Place: They Don't Want it to Close," KWS Oct 8, 1983.
51. "Residence for Girls Provided", KWS Feb. 6, 1963: 23.
52. "Cornerstone Ceremony Marks "Dreams Come True," KWS Oct. 29, 1962.
53. Bobbi Spark, "Kingston...And Her Less Fortunate Citizens," in Kingston 300: A Social Snapshot by Kingstonians ed David B. Holmes (Kingston: Corporation of Kingston, 1973) 141.
54. W. M. Nickle, Letter to David Fulton and David Walker, Oct. 16, 1959. RG 56, Vol 172, PAC.

In 1957, a Department of Planning and Development bureaucrat summarized the programs purpose to a City of

Kingston official.

It is an attempt on the part of the three levels of government to assist the purchaser in the lower income group in order that he may build his house at a reasonable cost, without making a healthy contribution to the professional subdivider.

A copy of the letter was passed along to the CMHC where an official drew brackets around the edges of the quotation and added a question mark which evidently displaying his disagreement with his provincial counterpart's assertion. RG 56, Vol. 171, PAC.

55. "New Subdivision: Taxes on Average House Gauged at \$40 Monthly," KWS Oct. 24, 1962: 8.

In order to prevent land hoarding and speculation, the CMHC required the lot purchasers to construct or purchase their houses as soon as possible. "Lots in Calvin Park on Sale for \$1,750 to \$1,850," KWS Oct. 24, 1962: 8.

56. Nebo S. Oraziotti, "The Changing Structure of the Housebuilding Industry and its Performance in Kingston, Ontario: 1961-1976," Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1979.

57. "Summary of Information: Propose Development-Penitentiary Farm, February 27, 1961," QUA and "Five Percent Land: What and Why," Ontario Planning. 63. 7. August-September 1959: 1.

Despite the checks and balances that were ingrained into the land assembly program's multi-governmental approval process, mistakes did occur. Twenty-five lots were found to be undersized and were later corrected. City ordinances required lots in this area to be at least 6000 square feet. However, some were as much as 428 square feet too small. It was a mystery as to how this miscalculation occurred. "Park Lots Undersize: Deputy Planning Officer," KWS Jan. 10, 1963.

58. "All Night Wait For Calvin Park Lots," KWS Oct. 25, 1962.

59. Peter Spurr, "Five Land Banks," City Magazine 2. 1. March-April, 1976: 12.

60. Five private subdivisions supplied the bulk of the city's new lots, still mainly unserviced, at prices ranging from \$3,200 to \$3,800. Ibid. 10-12.

61. Ibid. 13.

62. J. Stefan Dupre, "Intergovernmental Relations and the Metropolitan Area," in Politics and Government of Urban Canada: Selected Readings, eds. L. D. Feldman and M. D. Goldrick, 3rd edition (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1976) 225 and see James Simmons, The Canadian Urban System as a Political System, Part 1: The Conceptual Framework (Toronto: Center for Urban and Community Studies, 1983).
63. Stewart Bates, Letter to H. C. Green, Jan. 21, 1959, RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
64. Stephenson and Muirhead, A Planning Study of Kingston, Ontario, 67-69.
65. In 1959, during the course of an investigation of housing need, provincial authorities received applications from 127 families interested in low rental housing. Stewart Bates, Letter to Howard Green, Jan. 30, 1959. RG 56 Vol. 172, PAC.
Throughout the 1960's and 1970's the waiting list for public housing in Kingston was exceptionally long with well the peak being September 1970 when the 655 applications for public housing spots. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 84.
66. In 1962, Leslie Frost was succeeded by John Robarts and a new era of housing policy started with the province playing a more direct role in the market. One result was the Ontario Housing Corporation which was founded in 1964 and used federal funds to plan, construct and manage low cost rental housing. Shortly, the OHC became one of the largest landlords in the non-Communist world. For Robarts's change in heading see "Bold New Approach for Twelve Point Programme," Ontario Housing, Feb. 1962: 1. See also George Fallis, Housing Programs and Income Distribution in Ontario (Toronto: Ontario Economic Council 1980), David Donnison and Clare Ungerson, Housing Policy (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982) and R. J. Boivin, Corporate Profile (Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1988). For the Calvin Park proposal see Roger Wambolt, "Report of Market Value of Block "Z" Plan 1158 Calvin Park, Kingston" March 15, 1965," Unpublished Report, RG 56, Vol. 172, PAC.
67. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 95.
68. Ibid. 96.
69. Ibid. 96.
70. Dupre, "Intergovernmental Relations and the Metropolitan Area," 231-232.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

A case study examination of the aborted and executed land assembly projects in Kingston, Ontario during the 1950's has underscored a fundamental precept. City politics in Canada, and elsewhere, was and is primarily about real estate.¹ The planners' emphasis on single detached houses in Polson Park and Calvin Park embodied the values of individual homeownership shared by commercial-civic elite, and officials at all governmental levels.² The majority of Canadians could not climb to this middle income plateau and be capable of purchasing one of the land assembly lots along with a sufficiently high quality dwelling.³ Middle income professionals made up the bulk of Canadians able to purchase a home. Coincidentally this group constituted the majority of the country's officeholders.⁴ In other words, commercial-civic elite used the land assembly program to accommodate potential members of the commercial-civic elite. Meanwhile, an adequate social housing policy did not exist to satisfy the needy's residential requirements.

By no means was the phenomenon of the state placating middle income homeowners unique to Kingston. Since the early decades of this century, planners and other administrators in Canada used zoning and city planning to promote the interests of commerce and private property.⁵ As the century progressed, municipalities' autonomy and powers eroded. Conversely, the provinces' authority became more influential and encompassing.⁶ Local authorities

across the country were left with zoning, boosterism, and the championing of commercial concerns as the only means to chase their objectives of bringing prosperity to their municipalities.⁷ Hence, they did not welcome any threats, real or imagined, to the community's property values.⁸ Consequently, only subdivisions with "gold plated" quality could be constructed in prime locales while public housing projects were positioned in the community's less affluent areas.⁹

In the case of the land assembly program, as in other joint projects or planning procedure during the 1950's and 1960's, the federal and provincial governments concurred with the exclusionary practises of the municipal governments and their resident commercial-civic elite. Their viewpoints were swayed by the emergence of sizable and politically influential development firms during the decade.¹⁰ These concerns profited from the federal government's fiscal and mortgage policies. They were unwilling to surrender these profits to a comprehensive social housing program.¹¹ In essence, the federal and provincial governments placed the wants of its middle income citizens ahead of those of society's less affluent members.

The land assembly program was very much a reflection of the socio-economic and political attitudes of the 1950's. There was the belief held by the middle income families, that since they contributed a large portion of the nation's tax revenues they should also receive a substantial portion of benefits.¹² This was coupled with the notion that homeownership was a desirable goal and

the failure to reach the goal was somehow indicative of personal failings.¹³ Kingston's political scene during the 1950's and early 1960's was very different from the political scene at the end of the 1960's.¹⁴ Throughout the land assembly process, the commercial-civic elite nearly completely dominated the political discourse. There were almost no calls for a substantial public housing program to counterbalance the land assembly programs. It was not until the mid-1960's that tenant groups such as ATAK became prominent on the political landscape.¹⁵ The city's organized and skilled labor force favored the land assembly program because of the extra work that the projects brought and because its members were capable of purchasing the homes.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Kingston's disenfranchised residents were left without a voice or benefits from a system that denied them access.

In many respects, the land assembly program was a practical response to the serious conditions in Kingston during the 1950's and early 1960's. The economy was struggling and the only viable option for the commercial-civic elite was boosterism. They needed to attract a new industry or business to the city which represented well-paying jobs and tax revenues. A sound housing stock was necessary to entice the quarry. To some extent this strategy was fairly successful because Kingston's housing stock steadily improved during 1950's and 1960's.¹⁷ Moreover, Kingston was able to experience some degree of prosperity during the 1960's and onwards.¹⁸ Keeping the middle income families within the municipalities had some tertiary benefits for those incapable of

purchasing a land assembly unit. The new houses opened housing opportunities for low income families as middle income families moved from the inner city wards to Polson Park and Calvin Park.¹⁹ Anchoring middle income families to the city strengthened the local tax base and economy. In the United States, when the middle income families migrated to the suburbs the inner city that they left behind steadily decayed.²⁰ These middle income residents were the backbone of the city's political and social welfare structures.²¹ While these structures may have been inadequate, the fact remains that something is better than nothing.

Polson Park and Calvin Park generated some disadvantages for its residents and the surrounding community. Homeownership did not guarantee a profit for the individual involved. Variables such as high maintenance costs, a low resell price on a deflated market and declining neighborhood property values could potentially cut into potential profits.²² Traditionally, low income families spent a higher share of their earnings on shelter than did middle income families. A 1964 study indicated that families in the \$2,500-\$2,999 bracket spent almost a quarter of their income on shelter. Families in the \$5,000-\$5,999 range spent almost a fifth of their income on shelter.²³ As a result, some low income families may have mortgaged their future to purchase a home in Polson Park or Calvin Park.

There were small compensations for the families unable to purchase a home in these state subsidized subdivisions. The seventy-one units of public housing represented a minute percentage

of the total housing output between 1950 and 1960.²⁴ While the overall quality of Kingston's housing stock was improving during this period, rental accommodation was still in relatively rough shape with a portion of the residences in run-down conditions.²⁵ The closed nature of the community's political discourse ensured that the interests of disenfranchised majority incapable of purchasing a home were poorly represented.

5.2. CONCLUSION

This thesis has been a case study of the land assembly program in Kingston during the formative decade of the 1950's. It followed the land assembly program from its formation at the upper echelons of the federal and provincial bureaucracies down to its implementation at the ground level. The intergovernmental administrative entanglements involved in executing some relatively straight forward projects became readily evident during the proceedings. The program was very much a product of the era's attitudes toward homeownership, toward political power and benefits, and toward the poor. A simple question can be asked. Which group in society benefits most from a governmental program which supplies an essential of life, housing? The answer: middle income families capable of manipulating the governing process at the various levels of the state received the most from the program. This occurrence was not unique to Kingston nor even to Canada. It was indicative of the value system held by the local commercial-civic elite and shared by all levels of government in Canada and elsewhere. To conclude, an individual needed to possess real

property before he could attain any political power.²⁶

ENDNOTES

1. Andrew Sancton, "Conclusion: Canadian City Politics in Comparative Perspective," City Politics in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983) 296.
2. Mark Swenton, Homes Fit For Heroes: The Politics and Architecture of Early State Housing in Britain (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981) 8 and John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) 4-5.
3. Porter, The Vertical Mosaic, 5.
4. For the relation between the Kingston's civic-commercial elite and City Council see Chapter Three. For the relation between middle income professionals and the federal and provincial echelons of government see Porter, The Vertical Mosaic, 5.
5. See Kent Gerecke, "The History of Canadian City Planning," City Magazine, Summer 1976: 12-23 and Thomas Gunton, "The Evolution of Urban and Regional Planning in Canada: 1900-1960, PH. D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981, and Walter Nus, "Towards City Efficient: Theory and Practise of Zoning: 1919-1939," Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1979) 226-246.
6. Marsha Chandler and William Chandler, Public Policy and Provincial Politics (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979) and John Taylor, "Urban Autonomy in Canada: Its Evolution and Decline," Power and Place: Canadian Urban Development in the North American Context ed. Gilbert Stetler and F. J. Artibise (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986) 271-291.
7. Sancton, "Conclusion," 317.
8. Larry Bourne, The Geography of Housing (London: V. H. Winston and Sons, 1981) 229.
9. Down to Earth: The Report of the Federal/Provincial Task Force on the Supply and Prices of Service Land, Vol I. (Ottawa: The Task Force, 1978).
10. Allan Moscovitch, "Housing: Who Pays? Who Profits?" Inequality: Essays on the Political Economy of Social Welfare eds. Allan Moscovitch and Glenn Drover (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 334-335 and G. Barker, J. Penney, and W.

- Seccombe, Highrise and Superprofits (Kitchener: Dumont Press, 1973) 17.
11. Ibid., 333-334 and Ibid., 17.
 12. Irving Jay Goffman, The Burden of Canadian Tax: Allocation of Federal, Provincial and Local Taxes (Toronto: Canadian Tax Foundation, 1962) 7-9.
 13. This attitude was also prevalent in Canada's larger ideological cousin, the United States. Matthew Edel, Shaky Palaces: Homeownership and Social Mobility in Boston's Suburbanization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) 5.
 14. Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics, 1965-1970 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) 30.
 15. M. J. Goldsmith, Housing Demands and Housing Policy: A Case Study (Kingston: Institute of Local Government, Queen's University, 1972) 23.
 16. Harris, Democracy in Kingston, 35.
 17. According to the 1961 Census report twelve per cent of the city's families were living in crowded quarters compared to six percent in 1971. Cited in David Paterson, Kingston Housing Policy Study (Kingston: Kingston City Hall, 1976) 40.
 18. For instance Kingston's waterfront's appearance had improved enough to host the 1976 Sailing Olympics. Brian S. Osborne and Donald Swainson, Kingston: Building on the Past (Westport: Butternut Press Inc., 1988) 326-329.
 19. John Kirkland, "Housing Filtration in Kingston: 1953-1969," Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 1969. 101.
 20. Marion Clawson, Suburban Land Conversion in the United States: An Economic and Governmental Process (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971) 40.
 21. Richard Harris, Democracy in Kingston: A Social Movement in Urban Politics, 1965-1970 (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) 42.
 22. Edel, Shaky Places, 6-9.
 23. Survey was based on sampling of 2,034 families located in eleven major urban areas throughout Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Urban Family Expenditure: 1964 (Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1965) 30.

24. Between 1955 and 1960, 1988 new residential units were built in Kingston. The public housing units represented 3.5 per cent of the total. City of Kingston Building Department, "Annual Reports", cited in Donald M. Paterson, Kingston Housing Policy Study (Kingston: City of Kingston, 1976) 41.
25. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada, 1961: Summary of Housing Characteristics (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1963).
26. C. B. MacPherson, "A Political Theory of Property," Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973) 137.

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