NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI®
NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

AVIS:
L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l’Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n’y aura aucun contenu manquant.
ABSTRACT

One of the most interesting aspects of early Prince George history is the ongoing feud between the city's first two newspapers. On the surface this feud seems to exist only because of the confrontational and opinionated people who edited these newspapers. On deeper inspection it becomes clear that both of Prince George's founding newspapers argued as surrogates for the local interest groups they represented. They both articulated positions that would benefit their particular interest group, and their reporting and writing was designed to support this end.

Despite this, historians of Prince George have done little to explain this ongoing battle, particularly how it was fought through local newspapers. This thesis aims to show that in its early days Prince George was not a unified community, but was instead a competing group of small communities, fighting bitterly among themselves for dominance. Furthermore, this fight was conducted through the local newspapers primarily over the issues of the location of the station and the incorporation and the promotion of Prince George.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract  
Table of Contents  
List of Figures  
Acknowledgements  
Chapter One Introduction  
Chapter Two Prince George’s Quarrelsome Newspapers  
Chapter Three The Station Location Dispute  
Chapter Four Prince George’s Incorporation Fight  
Chapter Five The Unusual Promotion of Prince George  
Conclusion  
Bibliography
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure Description</th>
<th>Figure Number</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Battleships in Vera Cruz Harbour</td>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the British First-Class Cruisers…</td>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Motor Guns Being Sent to Fortify Canal</td>
<td>Figure 2.3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Motor Guns Used by the Belgians…</td>
<td>Figure 2.4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Fort George (Central)</td>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George’s City Beautiful Plan</td>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Real Fort George</td>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have patiently supported me in the lengthy process of writing this thesis. The guidance, passion, assistance, and inspiration of my supervisor, Dr William Morrison has been invaluable. His balanced and common sense approach to history makes working with him a joy and a delight. I also wish to thank my committee members, Dr Mary-Ellen Kelm, J. Kent Sedgwick, and Dr Eric Rapaport who have also aided and motivated me in this process. In addition, I must thank my grad student colleagues, whose attitude and ideas have made my MA much more dynamic, interdisciplinary, challenging, and enjoyable. Contact with graduate student historians at other universities, particularly Karen Simonson at the University of Manitoba, has also been central to my work. Finally, I must pay tribute to the University of Northern BC for being such a great institution. Along with many others, I sincerely believe that our university is headed for greater achievements and I can testify that UNBC has discovered a winning combination of teaching excellence, quality research, and student success.

On a personal level, I must thank my family—Dave, Linda, Shan, Tristie, and Trina—for kindly letting me live at home for most of this process, thereby shielding me from the real world and enabling me to finish. And, saving the best for last, I wish to thank my wife, Tara, for simultaneously tolerating my work and encouraging me to hurry up. Tara has the ability to bring me back to reality after I have been immersed in my topic all day, and she has waited patiently for the inevitable completion of this project. Although patience has never been her strong point, she has cultivated this to an amazing degree for my thesis.

For the help of all these people, and others, I am truly grateful.

RAP
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

One of the most interesting aspects of early Prince George history is the ongoing feud between the city's first two newspapers. On the surface, this feud seems to exist only because of the confrontational and opinionated people who edited these newspapers. On deeper inspection, it becomes clear that both of Prince George's founding newspapers argued as surrogates for the local interest groups they represented. They both articulated positions that would benefit their particular interest group, and their reporting and writing was designed to support this end.

Despite this, historians of Prince George have done little to explain this ongoing battle, particularly how it was fought through local newspapers. This thesis aims to show that in its early days Prince George was not a unified community, but was instead a competing group of small communities, fighting bitterly among themselves for dominance. Furthermore, this fight was conducted through the local newspapers primarily over the issues of the location of the station and the incorporation and the promotion of Prince George.

Although the focus of this work is by necessity limited to the scope of Prince George history, it is based on a strong foundation of other historical work. The first good history of the city is found in A History of Prince George by the Reverend F.E. Runnalls, published in 1946. While Runnalls' account of Prince George history is still dominant, his focus on railway and political history necessarily left out much. Lately, this is being remedied by other historians who discuss less known aspects of Prince George history. A recently published essay, for example, examines prostitution in the city, while a master's thesis looks at the
reasons for environmental change in the region.¹ What these works both share, however, is a dependence on Runnalls' seminal work, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

In fact, A History of Prince George is quite a good text. To be sure, it does emphasise church history and railway history, but Runnalls does not value these aspects of history to the exclusion of all others. Runnalls is not above mentioning rumours, social vices, recreation, First Nations history, and personal anecdotes at a time when all this was ignored by many other historians. It is the inclusion of these details that may have contributed to Runnalls' continued popularity.

However popular he may be, there is still room for improvement. For a more balanced view of Prince George life, researchers need to learn about what has happened since 1945, which is the year his account ended. Researchers would also prefer more social history than Runnalls provides, and more photographic analysis. To fill this need, Bev Christensen published a new history of Prince George in 1989.

Prince George: Rivers, Railways and Timber tries to be everything Runnalls was not. It examines more social history, particularly the great depression, as well as providing a general thematic history after World War II and up to the 1980s. Christensen's book, while not especially well organised, touches on all aspects of modern Prince George. Books like hers whet the researcher's appetite for more, because Christensen often deals with events so quickly and abruptly that one only sees the tip of the iceberg. Nevertheless, Prince George: Rivers, Railways and Timber has clearly enticed many others to research Prince George.

If the objective of a historian is to inspire other historians, then both Christensen and Runnalls have been successful. Owing in part to the University of Northern BC, Prince

George now has a history community producing a wide body of writing. Most recently, the Prince George Public Library published *Past Perfect: Prince George history and how to find it*, which serves as a bibliography of historical sources in Prince George. Books like this spur further interest in Prince George history.

In addition to Prince George history, this work also relies on scholarship that explains the historical role of newspapers on both a local and national scale. Paul Rutherford believes that 19th century and early 20th century “journalists saw themselves as important agents in a very moral universe.” As such, Canadian journalists were proudly partisan right into the early 20th century. Rutherford also provides a useful justification and qualification for the historian’s use of newspapers by writing, “Sadly, the lack of public opinion polls means that any analysis of the public’s wants must enter the realm of speculation. Much can be inferred, however, from a close scrutiny of exactly what was printed.”

Another prominent newspaper historian, Paul Voisey, has focussed an entire book on one small town Alberta newspaper—the *High River Times*. He does this, in part, because he believes that historians often use newspaper sources but rarely examine the newspapers that provide them. Voisey also provides an exceptionally useful framework for studying newspapers when he writes that his aim “has been to combine narrative and interpretation in traditional fashion and to present it in a manner that any educated person can read and understand.” Voisey’s approach is also the approach of this thesis.

---

3 Ibid., 230.
5 Ibid., xiv.
On a local level, Voisey also provides an excellent description of the role of weekly newspapers in the 20th century. This role was to avoid controversy, and in High River, "the Times sidestepped controversy most effectively by focussing relentlessly on themes that virtually all its advertisers and readers could endorse." This characterisation of weekly newspapers provides historians with a useful description, and one that is quite relevant to the Prince George experience, although more so of the later Prince George Citizen than the earlier Fort George Tribune and Fort George Herald.

The final pillar of Canadian newspaper history is undoubtedly J.M.S. Careless' Brown of the Globe. In it, Careless argues that through his newspaper George Brown played a pivotal role in Canada's confederation. In fact, Careless refers to Sir John A. Macdonald as Brown's "partner in confederation," displaying the influence wielded by Brown and the Globe. As "the voice of Upper Canada," the Globe developed a Canadian tradition of crusading partisan newspapers, where reporters were proud of their political attachments.

Partisan newspapers eventually fell from favour, however, and this change has been well documented by Wilfred Kesterton and Mary Vipond. As market forces began pushing newspapers to increase their distribution, they became more politically independent in the early 20th century. It was this period that most heavily impacted the Prince George newspapers and partly resulted in the rise of the independent Prince George Citizen.

As important as newspaper history is, the story of Prince George began with a railway—the Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP). It is therefore vital that this study be based on a comprehensive understanding of GTP history. The most important contemporary scholarship on this railway has been Frank Leonard's A Thousand Blunders, which provides

---

6 Ibid., 37.
8 Ibid, v.1, 327.
much needed analysis. Earlier works have either dealt with the rise and fall of the railway or simply trumpeted its benefits from a partisan viewpoint. In *A Thousand Blunders*, Leonard argues that a multiplicity of management mistakes caused the railway to lose much more money than necessary. He goes through company correspondence in a variety of case studies (including Prince George) to demonstrate that the company consistently lost money because of poor management decisions. Managers refused to compromise, organise, and delegate and this only served to speed up the GTP’s inevitable insolvency. Leonard’s detailed examination is refreshing in the outdated collection of Grand Trunk Pacific history, but his book has implications beyond just the GTP.

Leonard is also a part of the larger historical discussion about the impact of railways in general. Within Canada, authors such as Paul Voisey and Alan Artibise have contributed to this discussion, but outside of Canada there are many others. William Cronon, J.R. Kellett and Leonard Irwin to name a few, have all discussed the impact of railways in other countries, putting forward different theories and debating one another. The most fundamental debate in this field centres on how railways impact the growth of a community.

Across Canada, many historians provide examples of the railway’s impact on their specific community. John McCallum, for example, argues that Ontario grew faster than Québec because Ontario had better land and better access to the US market.\(^9\) Employing an economic argument rather than a social argument is innovative and Paul Voisey tries a similar approach for Vulcan, Alberta. He demonstrates that the Canadian Pacific Railway and the government determined much of the town’s layout and economy before settlers arrived.\(^10\) Voisey also produces a very original discussion about the use of mixed farming in

---


Vulcan.

Among Canadian urban historians, Alan Artibise is particularly noteworthy. His work moves beyond the direct impacts of the railway to look at the more general history of urban development in the Prairie West. For example, he characterises 1900–1914 as a land boom and speculation period, and 1913 as the pivotal year when the Prairies entered “several decades of relative stagnation and almost continual crisis.” Artibise also provides a four stage model identifying the Urban Development phases of the Prairie West. While his model is not meant to apply to B.C.’s interior, it is surprisingly useful, particularly when it shows that Prince George was founded in the tail end of the “dramatic growth” phase, and at the beginning of the “uncertainty” phase. This identification of broad trends in Western Canada is helpful for understanding how Prince George fits into the bigger picture.

Moving beyond Canadian railway history to view an international scope, one sees that international railway historians are much more innovative. Both Leonard Irwin and Basil Gounaris have made pioneering contributions to railway impact theory, by demonstrating that in both the United States and Macedonia, railways were used by the government to establish political dominance. Oftentimes, the economic feasibility of a railway was secondary, as the government sought to enforce sovereignty over peripheral regions.

Innocent Uzoechi has argued that with this newfound power over the periphery, industrial powers could better control the lives of workers. In his analysis of the railway in Eastern Nigeria he shows how the railway not only brought with it transportation, but also standard time, telegraphs, and concepts of “the punctual man;” concepts that were displayed

---

prominently in an attempt at social control. In the case of Nigeria, the railway also started its own colonisation programme to encourage increased freight and passenger traffic.

In Britain, David Smith argues that railways increased people's mobility—perhaps not a surprising insight—but in his look at the growth of resort towns he also observed that trains allowed many people to congregate in one small area, a phenomenon that had never before been possible for the middle and lower-middle classes. Jeffrey Richards and John MacKenzie build on this by showing how the many-classed nature of railways made the train station “an extraordinary example of social mixing.” They also point out how railways single-handedly stimulated the growth of peripheral regions, if only by virtue of their huge appetites for natural resources such as coal, iron, and wood.

Looking more closely at the social impact of railways, J.R. Kellett argues that railways did three things: add to traffic congestion, particularly through unnecessary track construction in an attempt to outflank competitors; overcrowd working class housing, which tend to be concentrated densely around railway stations (at least in England); and contribute to changes in land use particularly by encouraging the growth of resource-extraction industries. Moreover, Aidan Southall has also shown that railway lines facilitated the growth of suburbs along rail lines, despite the fact that these lines were frequently laid along arbitrarily chosen routes.

Focussing again on North America, the most notable scholar of railway development history is clearly William Cronon. In *Nature's Metropolis*, Cronon argues that railways played a pivotal role in making 19th century Chicago an economic centre. He goes beyond Chicago however, providing a more general perspective by arguing that with the railway, “time

---


accelerated and became more valuable” because trains liberated people from geography.\footnote{William Cronon, \textit{Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West} (New York: Norton, 1991) 74–76.} The railway could go anywhere and extract money regardless of the physical environment, essentially providing “the safety and regularity of a clockwork universe.” In return for this artificial universe, Cronon argues that railway companies became financial vacuum cleaners, sucking up massive amounts of money. Cronon also observes that railways created peripheral regions simply from the rates they charged for shipping, arguing that “before the railway no such dominance had been possible.”\footnote{Ibid., 79.}

Cronon has ideas about the social impacts of railway construction as well. He shows how, in Chicago, the railway effectively separated the upper and lower classes. The lower classes lived downwind and downriver of the railroad, while the upper classes lived upriver and upwind in artificially perfect suburbs. While Chicago’s layout was constructed by the railway, Cronon argues that both classes were still dependent on the railway and the city, no matter how far into the suburbs they lived. Cronon’s analysis is very useful because it offers a model of Chicago’s growth that can be used by other historians.

The analytical frameworks discussed above have been extremely useful in understanding the competition between the various interest groups in early Prince George. Through the newspapers, these groups fought for their economic existence, and it is important this history be explored, explained, and contextualised. Thus this thesis will show that in its early days Prince George was not a unified community, but was instead a competing group of small communities, fighting bitterly among themselves for dominance. Furthermore, this fight was conducted through the local newspapers primarily over the issues of the station location, the incorporation, and the promotion of Prince George.

The interest groups in early Prince George can be defined geographically. The
people in the Natural Resources Securities Company (NRS) townsite of Central Fort George constituted a distinct interest group. They were represented by their NRS-owned newspaper, the *Fort George Tribune*, which frequently attacked the people of Prince George and South Fort George and their newspaper the *Fort George Herald*. This attack was the primary source of conflict between Prince George's interest groups. “Prince George,” was the name given to the GTP-owned townsite, but before this townsite existed most of its inhabitants lived in South Fort George, the construction community that preceded both Prince George and Central Fort George.

A third interest group in Prince George, and the source of a secondary conflict, was the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. Although the interests of the railway frequently mirrored those of the Prince George community and the *Fort George Herald*, this was not always so. Occasionally the railway was the source of a secondary conflict when its priorities differed from those of the people of Prince George (as represented by the *Herald*). However, this conflict was characterised more by sporadic frustration and annoyance than by the outright hostility that characterised Prince George's primary conflict.

The theme of primary and secondary conflict is one that runs through most of the chapters of this thesis. To examine the fight between competing interest groups, the four most volatile subjects will be discussed. Chapter Two examines the newspapers themselves, arguing that although partisan newspapers were lessening in popularity across the country, Prince George's founding newspapers continued to represent distinct groups within the community.

Chapter Three begins the primary/secondary conflict discussion by postulating that the dispute over the railway's proposed station location was long and bitter in both local newspapers and demonstrated the competing economic interests of Central Fort George.
residents and Prince George residents. The primary conflict was between Central Fort George and Prince George and the secondary conflict was between the Prince George and the railway. In the case of the station location dispute, the Herald was mildly frustrated with the railway because the GTP refused to compromise on the station location, thereby hindering local economy.

Chapter Four turns to the fight for incorporation, showcasing a primary conflict over the proposed incorporation boundaries for Prince George. This primary conflict was an unsuccessful last ditch attempt by the Tribune to minimise the drop of property values in Central Fort George. The secondary conflict relating to the fight for incorporation centred on City Council’s frustration with the GTP’s aggressive approach to bargaining.

Finally, Chapter Five focuses on the promotion of early Prince George, arguing that competing interests promoted the communities differently and in ways designed to be harmful to their rivals. As usual, the primary conflict is between the Fort George Tribune and the Fort George Herald and the secondary conflict is between the Herald and the Grand Trunk Pacific. Due to the weak promotion attempts of the GTP and the poor timing of its land sale, the Herald vocalised Prince George’s frustration with the railway. Frustration that was important but nonetheless secondary to the dispute between the two communities.

The dispute between these two interest groups was pervasive and bitter. It was also reflected clearly in the columns of their warring newspapers. Hence, this study will begin with a detailed examination of these newspapers and the communities they represented.
CHAPTER TWO
Prince George’s Quarrelsome Newspapers

Prince George’s early newspapers had very straightforward perspectives—they were both surrogates for competing interest groups. The Fort George Tribune represented the people of Central Fort George and the Natural Resources Securities Company (NRS). The Fort George Herald represented the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the people of South Fort George and, later, Prince George. These two communities, and therefore their newspapers, were in direct economic competition with each other. They were competing for money in the form of new immigrants and new investment and their respective newspapers played an important role in this battle. All this happened at a time when partisan newspapers, like the Tribune and Herald, were lessening in popularity right across Canada and were being replaced by newspapers which declared themselves “independent.” Despite this, Prince George’s founding newspapers continued to represent partisan interest groups in their community.

The Fort George Tribune was Prince George’s earliest newspaper. It was founded by John Houston in November, 1909 making it the area’s first newspaper.1 Houston was quite an experienced and well-liked editor and so it was a shock to the young community when he died the following year. During the spring of 1910 the Tribune was sold and moved to the new NRS townsite of Central Fort George, and the new owners eventually renamed it the Fort George Weekly Tribune.2

From then on, the Tribune sought only to promote Central Fort George. The newspaper depicted a “decent and healthful” community, as opposed to the hard-living

---

2 Ibid. To avoid confusion, these notes will not distinguish between the Fort George Tribune and the Fort George Weekly Tribune, nor will they distinguish between the Fort George Herald and the Prince George Herald.
construction town of South Fort George (Prince George had not yet been established). To demonstrate the moral virtues of Central Fort George, the Tribune also tried to expose the evils of South Fort George, incurring the wrath of the newly founded Fort George Herald.

As well as trumpeting the greatness of Central Fort George, the Tribune also acted as an advocate for local concerns with external forces. The Tribune regularly published criticism of the railway, be it for line surveying, the speed of construction, or the station location. The issue of the station location, in particular, caused a great deal of concern—eventually leading to a prolonged legal battle with the Herald. Central Fort George won this battle, but they lost the war. After several devastating fires and a mass migration to the newly incorporated townsite of Prince George, the Tribune ceased publication in the spring of 1915.

The Tribune's archrival and nemesis, the Fort George Herald, was founded in the spring of 1911 in South Fort George. It was founded by John Daniell, who published, edited, set type, and did just about everything else, for the Herald. In its very first issue he declared "our aim during the life of this publication [is] to give our readers a true and accurate account of the progress and development of this place." He went on to attack some of the NRS publicity about the region saying, "It is a regrettable fact that much of the advertising issued by the interested corporations conveys an utterly false impression of the existing conditions here today…The Fort George Herald will endeavour to expose any of the over ambitious efforts of these ad writers and will do battle with the corporations [i.e. the NRS] who seek to advance their interests by an injudicious operating." Clearly, this mission statement was a battle cry from the outset.

Daniell defended the interests of South Fort George, Prince George (he moved there in 1914), and the Grand Trunk Pacific vigorously. He continually tried to expose the evils of

---

4 *Fort George Herald*, August 20, 1910, 2.
the NRS, its leader George Hammond, and the *Fort George Tribune*. Daniell frequently referred to the *Tribune* as the NRS “dribbling bib” or the “company organ,” often penning personal attacks on the *Tribune*’s editor. In doing so, the *Herald* reflected the hostility between the competing economic factions of Central Fort George and Prince George—the *Tribune* versus the *Herald*.

This hostility eventually killed both of Prince George’s original newspapers, giving rise to several others. The *Prince George Citizen* was founded in June, 1916, with the combination of the *Prince George Daily News* and the *Prince George Star*. The *Prince George Post*, which was mentioned earlier, was John Daniell’s newspaper after he was forced to leave the *Herald*. The *Post* carried mainly wire articles, and occasional editorials. Daniell seems to have lost interest in publishing, and in October, 1916 ceased publication of the *Post* so he could join the air force. The *Prince George Star* had a similarly short existence, lasting from October, 1916 to May, 1917. Like the *Post*, the *Star* carried primarily national and international news, but unlike the *Post*, the *Star*’s editorials did not consistently side with any identifiable interest groups within Prince George—or at least not the same ones the *Tribune* and *Herald* had sided with in the preceding years. The *Star* was Prince George’s first example of a growing trend in newspapers—-independence.

The *Star* was not strictly independent—it seemed to side more often with the provincial Liberal party—but it was independent of the old station location dispute and the ongoing competition between Central Fort George and Prince George. However, the *Star* faded in 1917, and was replaced with the *Prince George Citizen* which was proudly independent. Rather than take sides in the station location dispute, the *Citizen* merely argued.

---

5 Ibid.
6 *Prince George Post*, October 9, 1915, 1.
that railway and council should cooperate. The rise of the *Prince George Citizen* was also part of a national trend toward independent, non-partisan newspapers.

Returning to Prince George's founding newspapers, the *Tribune* and the *Herald*, an interesting example of their competition is how both newspapers dealt with the issue of social vice—trading blows while attempting to cast their community in a positive light. Both communities were well aware of the hard-living reputation of railway work camps and both tried hard to distinguish themselves from these sinful communities. During railway construction, these "End-of-Steel" villages were reportedly "Spreading Vice and Crime and Mulcting the Lowly Labourer of His Wages."7 In a published account of life in railway camps, W. Lacey May dramatically recounts that

> An end-of-steel village is made up of booze, billiards, and belles. It is the home of the illicit liquor traffic of construction, the location of enough pool-tables to stock a large city and the residence of women who never elsewhere enjoyed so much freedom.8

Within Prince George, examples of public drunkenness were regularly evidenced in the newspapers. The guilty party often appears to have been a railway worker. For example, on May 24, 1913, a "coloured railway worker" is reported to have been sentenced to three months in jail, apparently for public drunkenness. The same issue also revealed, in a fairly low-key manner, that a drunken brawl recently occurred outside a drinking establishment, and that rioters began targeting police when the authorities tried to end it.9 Attitudes toward alcoholism seemed to have been tolerant, however, and so the issue rarely caused public excitement even if it were regularly mentioned in the newspaper. What caused controversy was prostitution.

---

7 Ibid., September 20, 1913, 3.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., May 24, 1913, 8. Also see Ibid., April 24, 1913, 7.
Prince George newspapers first mentioned prostitution on June 14, 1913, when John Daniell’s *Herald* announced that it supported the creation of a restricted area on the outskirts of South Fort George. The *Tribune* self-righteously argued against this, attacking both a well-known madam—Irene Jordan—and the morals of the people in South Fort George. The *Tribune* editorialist wrote disparagingly that, “it seems plain that the people of Fort George are content to extend to [Irene Jordan] and her business, a passive, if not a positive welcome.” The article continued with the author attempting to expose Jordan’s enterprise, describing the lots she had purchased (13–18, Block 103, Section D), the number of rooms for the brothel (14), and the interior finish (beaver board)—throughout it all, the author positioning Central Fort George as a moral, upstanding town compared to that den of debauchery, South Fort George.

Not surprisingly this attitude sparked a minor feud between the papers that brought the prostitution issue to centre stage. The *Herald* soon revealed that, in fact, Central Fort George had three brothels whereas South Fort George had only two. Daniell also accused the *Tribune* of deceiving the public living outside the region so that the *Tribune’s* vision of Central Fort George would appear to uphold NRS advertising that called Central Fort George a “clean city.” Then, after making this accusation something dramatic must have happened because in the next issue the *Herald* pulled out all stops:

Like the puling cur that returns to its vomit, the organ of the outside townsite interests [the *Tribune*] has again taken up the weary burden of its master [George Hammond], the promoter of doubtful fame who owns the body and soul of the townsite’s organ writers...We can afford to pass by the snapping cur as we are

---

10 Ibid., June 14, 1913, 2.  
11 *Fort George Tribune*, July 12, 1913, 1.  
12 Ibid. Some evidence seems to indicate that this legal reference may have been quoted incorrectly by the *Tribune*. Note that the *Tribune* also describes this land as being “located at the corner of Seventh avenue and Cariboo street.”  
13 *Fort George Herald*, July 19, 1913, 1.
watching the shifty countenance of the man who holds its leash... [A man] whose picture is hanging in the rogue’s gallery in Terre Haute, Indiana.14

John Daniell was clearly very angry here, so angry that he was accused of libel for writing that Hammond’s picture was in a “rogue’s gallery.” Something dramatic had happened: a zealous Presbyterian minister had caused a controversy in Toronto with his revelations of sinning in Fort George.

According to Bev Christensen, “In June 1913 the Reverend Wright created a stir in the area when he was quoted in the Toronto Globe as telling a large missionary meeting in Toronto he had ‘...walked 300 miles from the very gates of hell’ to attend the meeting. When he was asked to describe the vices which were rampant in the community he said, ‘In the first place the liquor traffic is flourishing. There are two saloons with four to six bartenders each...[and] four big houses with 30 women in South Fort George two blocks from Knox Church.”15 Although the Herald denounced the Reverend Wright, in many ways this revelation became a turning point, as citizens began to understand that prostitution and drinking partly defined their community.16 When the next prostitution controversy occurred, it was no longer viewed as a serious issue—showing that the problem of prostitution had become more incorporated into the Prince George consciousness.

Part two in the prostitution controversy happened in 1915 when Prince George’s new City Council sought a permanent home. When they finally found one, the Prince George Post, proudly announced it in their headline: “House of Ill Fame Chosen For Temporary City Hall.”17 The house that Irene Jordan had built back in 1913 was quickly shut down by the Provincial Police, and had since been moved to Prince George where it was now being

14 Ibid., August 2, 1913, 2.
16 Fort George Herald, June 14, 1913, 3.
17 Prince George Post, July 10, 1915, 1.
offered for rent. At $30 per month this was admittedly the most economical choice for a temporary city hall, but the paper disapproved because it meant “paying rent to a known prostitute.” But the writer also poked fun at the issue, hypothesising the use of “various ‘boudoirs,’ parlours, etc., for the different aldermen. A large parlour on the ground floor will form the council chamber. Other of the rooms will be used by the mayor, who will doubtless occupy the principal bedroom...”18 Although the paper did not approve of this rental agreement, the issue was certainly not as publicly contentious as the previous one.

The Herald reacted to this news in much the same way, although its position on prostitution had completely changed since the first controversy. The Herald too expressed displeasure with the decision, and provided extensive speculation on how space would be allocated within the former brothel. The writer sarcastically hypothesised that “Mayor Gillett will occupy the largest bedroom with Ald. Ruggles ensconced in the boudoir adjoining... Ratepayers in search of officials are requested to walk right in and not bother about the electric bell.”19 The writer also mentioned that although prostitution was grudgingly accepted in the early days “when railway construction was at its height, and money was plentiful among the parasitic class,” now “the people of Fort George put up a strenuous fight against a plague spot of its kind.”20 By this point, the Fort George Tribune had folded and could no longer defend a Central Fort George perspective, as it had in the first prostitution dispute. Nevertheless, this controversy highlights a minor struggle between the two newspapers, on behalf of their competing communities.

The major struggle between the Tribune and the Herald was over an issue of fundamental economic importance to the two communities—the proposed location for the
railway's train station. The antagonism between the communities was so huge that it led to a libel suit between the two rival newspapers. The two newspapers contradicted each other vigorously at every possible opportunity and, by the Herald's second year in print, Daniell had taken to calling the Tribune's editor an "obese and brainless healer" and writing that his "libel needs straightening out." Frequently, the Tribune would print one version of a story and the Herald would completely contradict it. By 1912, both newspapers were totally preoccupied with hating the other, and virtually every edition included derogatory comments about the other. Runnalls accurately characterises this as a "continual wordy war." Of course, the newspapers were not simply fighting for their own esoteric reasons, but fighting as surrogates for two competing communities. However, this preoccupation with fighting each other is surprising in the Tribune's case, since it wrote primarily for outside consumption, given the declining population in Central Fort George.

But for some reason, the publishers of both newspapers never seemed to grasp that the credibility of both their communities was harmed by the incessant quarrelling. As well, the likelihood of investment in Prince George was being harmed by all these accusations of lying, despite the fact that economic investment and growth were the stated intentions of both newspapers. The Herald loved to refer to the Tribune as the NRS' "Dribbling Bib" and for its part, the Tribune referred to the Herald as being pro-GTP, (which may have been partly out of jealousy because only the Herald ran GTP advertising). As seen, this criticism escalated until the Herald accused George Hammond of having his picture in a "rogue's

---

21 This issue is discussed extensively in the next chapter.
22 Ibid., March 25, 1911, 2.
24 Fort George Herald June 24, 1911, 1.
gallery” in the United States. At this point the credibility of both newspapers descended into farce when the NRS and the Tribune sued John Daniell for libel.

At first the litigation seemed destined to fail, but the government suddenly decided to prosecute the case as a criminal suit, prolonging the fiasco further. The Herald was displeased with this sudden decision and attributed it to meddling by Hammond. The Herald was also particularly disturbed by the negative coverage this case received in other newspapers. According to the Herald, untruthful coverage was not just limited to the Tribune. The newspaper also lashed out at the coastal press and particularly the Vancouver Sun for printing “garbled and misleading statements.” The writer went on to characterise the Sun’s editor as a “notorious blackguard who has regard for neither truth nor justice.”

Eventually the Herald lost the case, a result it attributed to the conniving legal team of the NRS. John Daniell was forced to step down as editor of the Herald, but the damage to the newspaper’s credibility was already done. In his farewell editorial, Daniell wrote that “a clause in the selling agreement” forbade him from publishing any other local newspaper and so Daniell appeared to be gone for good. But one year later Daniell was resurrected on the newspaper scene, working as the editor and manager (but not publisher) of the Prince George Post.

The Post quickly assumed the arguments and opinions Daniell had espoused with the Herald, particularly Daniell’s hatred for the Tribune and so the situation remained the same. Both newspapers still reflected the ongoing tension between Central Fort George and Prince George.

Prince George’s founding newspapers also represented narrow partisan interests in their depiction of external issues. B.C.’s Land Act was a frequent source of criticism because

---

25 Ibid., October 21, 1911, 1.
26 Ibid., June 1, 1912, 1.
27 Ibid., November 15, 1913, 1.
28 Prince George Post, April 3, 1915, 2.
it facilitated speculation by imposing minimal requirements for several types of land pre­
emptions.20 In addition to this, the Land Act also required the provincial government to
appropriate a quarter of all townsite land. By 1911, there was frustration with the
government on this point in particular. Because the Minister of Lands refused to sell or
develop any of the land his government owned, the lots effectively hindered development.
According to the Herald, “detached unsold lots in South Fort George [are] the one and only
reason why there exists unconnected sidewalks and [im]properly graded streets throughout
the town.”20 The writer went on to complain that Prince George’s future was being harmed
by an uncaring provincial government—and there was little Prince George people could do
about this since the town was not yet incorporated.

Decisions made by the Board of Railway Commissioners were also frequently
criticised in the newspapers. The railway commission unknowingly encouraged this by
hearing appeal after appeal after appeal, making the whole process seem quite farcical. The
Herald rightly accused the board of further dividing Prince George over the station location
question because the board refused to make a decision and stand by it, thereby withholding
any economic certainty for Prince George developers.31 Thus, the station dispute also
contributed to the growing Prince George perception that destiny was really determined by
outside forces.

The onset of World War I only contributed to this perception. In Prince George,
the Great War was first mentioned in print on August 6, 1914, and from there it proved to
be a giant vacuum for money, lives, and eventually lumber.32 The national issue of
conscription was particularly well represented in a new newspaper, the Prince George Star, as

---

20 This discussion will continue more extensively in later chapters.
20 Fort George Herald, April 29, 1911, 1.
31 Ibid., January 2, 1915, 1. Also see Ibid., August 6, 1915, 1.
32 Ibid., August 6, 1914, 1.
were many other wartime issues.\textsuperscript{33} This was one more debate where the newspapers reflected a sense of external control felt in both Central Fort George and Prince George.

The highly partisan newspaper coverage that characterised Prince George’s early newspapers continued until roughly 1916. The \textit{Tribune} folded in 1915 primarily due to the collapse of Central Fort George, and the \textit{Herald} did not fare much better. Editor John Daniell had been forced out of the \textit{Herald} after the infamous Libel suit and the \textit{Herald}, without Daniell at its helm, gradually seemed to sink. The problem with the \textit{Herald} after Daniell’s departure is graphically depicted in Figures 2.1–2.4, which reveal the \textit{Herald} reusing the same images but with different captions.\textsuperscript{34} This illustrates either incompetence or duplicity—neither boding well for the Herald’s future. Subsequently, the \textit{Herald} folded in the spring of 1916, one year after the death of the \textit{Tribune}.\textsuperscript{35} These two old warhorses were replaced by a newspaper with a less insular perspective—one that included Central Fort George, Prince George, and South Fort George.

\textsuperscript{33} For an example, see \textit{Prince George Star}, November 10, 1916, 1.
\textsuperscript{34} Boat pictures are from \textit{Fort George Herald}, July 4, 1914, 4; and August 22, 1914, 3. Gun pictures are from \textit{Ibid.}, July 18, 1914, 4 and August 22, 1914, 4.
\textsuperscript{35} Moles, 31.
The fact that the American Battleships are gathering slowly but surely in Mexican waters emphasizes the fact that the attitude of the United States is growing firmer. While no definite action may have been decided on yet, it is readily apparent that the United States Government is going to be in readiness for prompt and efficient action should the necessary crisis arise.

This picture shows American war vessels in the Harbor of Vera Cruz, one of the principal Mexican ports.

Figures 2.1: *Fort George Herald*, July 4, 1914.  
Figure 2.2: *Fort George Herald* August 22, 1914.
Now that the Panama Canal has been completed, the task of properly fortifying the Canal against foreign invasion has begun. Several days ago fourteen large motor guns were shipped aboard the Panama Steamer Christobal. The guns were accompanied by a detachment of artillerymen, and are only a forerunner of what is to follow.

Along the line of the Canal nature has provided many natural intrenchments; the Canal being so very narrow it is possible to so place guns, and owing to the shallowness of the Canal, it is also possible to place mines that it would be absolutely impossible for foreign fighting vessels to enter the waters of the Canal without certain destruction. The above photograph shows the guns being hoisted on to the deck of the steamer Christobal preparatory to shipment.

The above is a photograph of the type of Motor Guns used by the Belgians for the defence of Liege. These guns are considered the most destructive ever made, and the simplicity of their mechanism combined with the ease and quickness with which they can be recharged makes them very valuable for the defence of fortifications.
The Prince George Citizen was politically independent and part of a growing national trend. Previously, newspapers had been proudly partisan, making no attempt to hide their bias. Minko Sotiron writes that in the 1800s, Canadian newspapers were "small, financially unstable enterprises that acted as spokesmen for, and were largely dependent on, the support of a particular political party." This was because 19th century newspapers focussed primarily on politics, and being a publisher also meant being a politician. The classic Canadian example of this is George Brown, a father of confederation and publisher of the Globe.

Through the Globe, Brown played a major role in Canada's reform movement and drive for confederation. He was popularly referred to as the "voice of Upper Canada" and J.M.S. Careless claims that Brown's newspaper was the most powerful in British North America. This proud tradition was not to last much longer however, because the "harbinger of newspaper modernisation was in the 'New Journalism' or 'people's press' of Great Britain and the United States in the 1830s and 40s." Rather than represent 19th century concepts of improvement, editors and journalists began to perceive newspapers in a market-driven context.

As Anthony Smith writes, after 1900 "the opinion-leading functions of the newspaper...shrivelled as its economic functions [became] more scientifically organised. Where it saw itself in its heyday as a medium competing for the attention of voting groups and interest groups, it [came] to concentrate on making itself indispensable to consumers of

---

37 Ibid., 107.
38 Careless, v. 2, viii.
39 Ibid., v. 1, 327. Ibid., v. 2, 1.
41 Rutherford, A Victorian authority, 8.
goods.” Moreover, editorials were written to offend as few as possible and often to explain the news rather than argue about a particular divisive issue. Canadian newspapers also began to feature more variety in the news, including human interest stories, women’s news, and crime reporting. This was all part of the trend toward non-partisan economically-driven journalism. Newspapers tried to please as many people as possible with their wide content, while offending as few as possible with their opinions and editorials.

Frontier newspapers were a different breed however. In Prince George, newspapers were slow in conforming to the national trend toward non-partisanship, a fact that is likely due to the deeply-divided audience these newspapers served. Until the 1950s, rural newspapers enjoyed a virtual monopoly on information, particularly in communities like Prince George. Newspapers in frontier-type communities frequently adopted the role of booster. As Paul Voisey writes, “Newspapers across Canada have always acted as boosters for their communities, but particularly so in the early twentieth century West, when lightning growth fuelled grand ambitions and when decisions about the locations of many economic facilities remained unsettled.”

In the case of High River, Alberta, the High River Times “eagerly became a tool for boosterism because it reflected the attitudes and hopes of its readers and advertisers.” This experience is similar to the Prince George experience—with the obvious exception that Prince George spawned two competing booster newspapers. Nonetheless, the boosterism of the Prince George newspapers is not unique in Canadian newspaper history.

44 Voisey, *High River and the Times*, xviii.
46 Voisey, *High River and the Times*, 43.
47 Ibid., 59.
What is unique is how long the battle between the *Tribune* and the *Herald* continued. Partisan journalism was declining across Canada while these two were still fighting vigorously. However, the trend finally caught up to Prince George in 1916, with the collapse of both the *Tribune* and *Herald* and the beginning of the more independent *Prince George Citizen*. To better understand this occurrence, this study must now return to the ubiquitous dispute over the station location. This dispute clearly illustrates that origin of the divided communities and their partisan newspapers.
CHAPTER THREE
The Station Location Dispute

The longest-lasting and most divisive battle in Prince George's newspaper war was the dispute over the proposed station location. Lasting for almost a decade, this dispute overshadowed all others and came to have a huge impact on the early development of Prince George. Through it all, the local newspapers regularly articulated the positions of both sides in this long and bitter dispute that demonstrated the competing economic interests of Central Fort George residents and Prince George residents.

The station location dispute illustrates both a primary and secondary conflict within the local interest groups that shaped the community. The secondary conflict, which will be examined later, was the frustration expressed in Prince George toward the railway. However, this issue was eclipsed by the much larger conflict between Central Fort George and Prince George. Both communities used their respective newspapers, the *Tribune* and the *Herald*, as surrogate fighters in this bitter dispute—a dispute that began early in Prince George's history.

Prince George's history includes three different communities named "George," and each community referred to itself and the other Georges in different and inconsistent ways. First there was Fort George, established as a fur trade post in 1807 and named "in honour of the reigning sovereign, George the Third."¹ Life in the Hudson's Bay Company post was uneventful for a century until the first land boom (and bust) occurred, initiated by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

---

¹ Runnalls, 23.
When investors and developers learned where the GTP was to be located, land speculation ran rampant along the entire line, and the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako rivers was no exception. From this came the second community, South Fort George, a frontier community that was first based on land speculation and became a critical supply point during railway construction. South Fort George was, not surprisingly, just south of Fort George, conveniently located on the Fraser River. It was, therefore, an ideal distribution point for the water-borne construction traffic during the initial construction phase.

A well-known promoter of the Fort George area was the Northern Resources Securities Company. The NRS was a loud and bold land sales company run by George Hammond, a loud and bold promoter.² His company sought to found townsites, sell lots, and make money. In turn, the money would be passed on to the different companies and individuals the NRS represented.³ The promotional efforts of the NRS are vital to understanding the history and development of the region because the NRS drafted townsites along much of the GTP line in order to improve the real estate speculation business and sell more NRS lots. In Prince George, Hammond created and advertised a townsites called “Fort George,” although it was some distance away from the Hudson’s Bay Company trading post of Fort George (see Figure 3.1). To complicate this further, residents of South Fort George routinely referred to Hammond’s townsites as “Central Fort George,” rather than Fort George, and this practice has been continued for this thesis, in order to maintain clarity of discussion.

² Runnalls, 85.
Figure 3.1: The layout of Central Fort George was entirely conventional. Central Fort George’s Central Ave was located where Highway 97 now is. See also Figure 5.1, page 72, for a more general map of the area.

4 Runnalls, 108.
The third George originated when the Grand Trunk Pacific laid out its own townsite, calling it "Prince George." This name seems to have been designed primarily to distinguish the official GTP townsite from the other two variations of "George." However, there is some doubt on this point, since several members of the Royal Family who were named Prince George lived during this period. Nonetheless, when the name of "Prince George" was announced in 1913 it did distinguish the GTP townsite from both Central Fort George and South Fort George.

By 1914, all three competing communities were eager for incorporation and the public works development that would follow. Although they were eager, the three communities were anything but united. The tension was primarily between Central Fort George and the other two, and the fight was over the proposed location for the Grand Trunk Pacific's railway station in Prince George.

The proposed station location was developed in a very convoluted way. Although it was traditional for railway companies to design and build their own townsites, by 1909 the Grand Trunk Pacific began to realise that contracting out the development and promotion of townsites was more profitable than doing all the work in house. This realisation led to more flexibility on the part of the railway and may explain why, in March of 1911, George Hammond of the NRS signed an agreement with Charles Hays of the GTP to place the station at a location that was mutually acceptable and close to NRS land. Apparently, Hays agreed to accept $200,000 from Hammond in exchange for providing a preferential station location. Both men were caught up in the railway fever of the time and believed Prince

---

5 Christensen, 45.
6 The fur trade post closed in April of 1915. Fort George Herald, April 16, 1915, 1.
8 Fort George Herald, November 28, 1914, 1.
George would become a hub for other railways, including a proposed North/South railway from Vancouver. But this agreement seemed to vanish when, on May 4th, 1912, the Fort George Herald belatedly reported that Charles Hays’ body had been found floating in the vicinity of the sunken Titanic. According to Runnalls, this death doomed the NRS/GTP agreement because the new railway president refused to honour it.

In fact, Runnalls’ version of events is simplified. Even if Hays had been rescued from the Titanic, it is unlikely he would have followed through with the NRS agreement. During the time Hays had been working with Hammond, Hays made no secret of the fact that he was also negotiating with the federal Department of Indian Affairs to purchase the Indian reserve located at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako Rivers. Much of the reserve land was actually located on a floodplain and clearly not ideal for a town site. Despite this, the railway needed land for its town and the floodplain was the only suitable area that was not owned by Hammond.

Moreover, several controversies and a damaging Ontario court case had harmed Hammond’s bargaining position with the GTP as far back as 1910. The court case centred on a Saturday Night exposé of NRS advertising. Before the First World War, Saturday Night changed “into an opinionated review of life with a definite snob appeal” and the highbrow magazine accused the rather provincial NRS of exaggerating the proximity of Central Fort George to the proposed Prince George train station in order to sell more lots. However, the court found in Saturday Night’s favour, striking an early blow to Hammond’s credibility. Since the “financial health [of the NRS] depended

9 Runnalls, 115.
10 Fort George Herald, May 4, 1912, 1.
11 Runnalls, 116.
14 Fort George Herald, October 15, 1910, 1.
on interested queries from distant potential lost purchasers,"'\textsuperscript{15} the NRS was essentially a mail-order real estate company—so when it began losing credibility, GTP management thought Hammond and his company could be quickly written off. But this did not happen.

The NRS may have suffered from weakened credibility, but its \textit{Tribune} and Prince George's \textit{Herald} hung on for a long time, and the animosity between the two significantly hindered the region. The station dispute aroused strong feelings which dated back to the rivalry between the GTP and NRS. The NRS townsite of Central Fort George was designed to compete with the GTP townsite of Prince George, but the NRS needed the railway station reasonably close to Central Fort George to facilitate local development. This was well known at the time and, as noted earlier, Hammond had tried but failed to broker a deal. Deciding on a station location was the primarily GTP's prerogative and they proposed a town plan that provided for a station located at the north end of George Street—quite a distance from Central Fort George.

This proposed location caused an outcry in Central Fort George, from both landowners and the NRS. South Fort George residents, on the other hand, were likely pleased with the proposed location because it publicly insulted George Hammond and the NRS, who were already notorious for their exaggerated advertising. Many South Fort George residents also planned to purchase lots in the new railway townsite, and eventually move there, whereas Central Fort George residents generally wanted to stay put. Central Fort George was not a construction camp like South Fort George, but was designed for permanent settlement and long-term investment. Thus, the people of Central Fort George were particularly concerned by the threat of a distant station. These people knew that

\textsuperscript{15} Leonard, \textit{A Thousand Blunders}, 187.
although the railway had a great deal of autonomy in choosing the location of townsites, the GTP was still accountable to the Board of Railway of Commissioners.

So concerned were the residents of Central Fort George that the NRS launched an appeal to the Canadian Board of Railway Commissioners (BRC), which oversaw important decisions that had been taken by railway companies. This appeal marks the beginning of one of the most tedious periods in Prince George history—the continuous, ongoing, and never-ending appeals to the BRC. At various points in time the indecisive BRC ordered that the station be located at several different places along First Avenue, ranging from east of the Cameron Street Bridge to George Street, but these decisions mattered little to the railway.\textsuperscript{16}

The board was exceptionally indecisive, refusing to stand by any of its decisions on the station location. This harmed the value of Prince George and Central Fort George land holdings by creating considerable market uncertainty. Investors were eager to buy lots that were close to the centre of town, and the centre of town was determined by the location of the railway station. However, the proposed station location shifted regularly, after each consecutive appeal to the Board of Railway Commissioners.

This uncertainty not only caused tension between the GTP and the NRS, but also led to outright hostility between residents of the competing town sites. The hostility was represented by the mutual loathing between the newspapers of Central Fort George and Prince George. While this led to many amusingly vituperative editorials, it did nothing to develop and promote the city. In fact, this tension hindered investment by demonstrating the economic uncertainty that existed in Prince George.

In 1914, the railway chose to build a “temporary station” at the end of George Street and this was, for all intents and purposes a fully-functioning station (much to the chagrin of

Central Fort George). Appeals came and went and the station did not move, because the GTP refused to comply with the BRC’s rulings. Despite this, it seemed as though the BRC might ultimately force the railway into building the station further west, because the BRC had occasionally favoured Central Fort George’s demand for a more westerly (and therefore closer) station.

Although Central Fort George eventually began fading from power, this issue refused to go away because it was a traditional sore point for many former Central Fort George residents who had since moved into Prince George. Most people living in the region at the time either disliked the Grand Trunk Pacific for manipulating business owners and breaking their promise to the NRS, or hated George Hammond for hindering the development of the area and antagonizing the GTP. Naturally, the station location was the first and only issue in Prince George’s premiere civic election.

One of the qualifications necessary for voting in Prince George’s first election was to have owned $1000 worth of Prince George real estate for at least six months. The process was made more complicated by the lack of a recent land value assessment which, of course, affected who could vote. Because few people in Prince George met these requirements, it was clear the municipal government was going to be dominated by landowners formerly living in Central Fort George or ones from South Fort George. This came to pass, evidenced in the election of Prince George’s first mayor, W.G. Gillett.

Gillett was a local contractor with extensive land holdings, and he was decisively elected by the all the previous residents of Central Fort George. Gillett favoured the NRS

---

17 Runnalls, 138, 154.
18 Fort George Herald, March 12, 1915, 1. Hansard to Joint Incorporation Committee, Smelts, 23.
20 Ibid., 2.
preference for the station location—either that, or the compromise location of Victoria Street, where he owned land.\textsuperscript{21} The election nicely showcased the animosity in Prince George between the \textit{Herald} and \textit{Tribune} newspapers that culminated in this event. Angry editorials were written by the \textit{Herald} accusing Gillett of being a puppet for the NRS, and the \textit{Tribune} gloated when Gillett won.\textsuperscript{22} The \textit{Tribune} wrote, “The man on the outside looking in never at any time admitted that there was a ghost of a chance that Mr. Gillett would be defeated...”\textsuperscript{23} Reflecting the increasing racism of the time, the \textit{Herald} blamed the undesirable result on the “foreign vote.”\textsuperscript{24} Because of accusations like this, Prince George’s first election was perhaps the most bitter and divisive in its history—for council and citizens alike. And into this political climate walked Hugh Hansard of the GTP, determined to pressure council vigorously into favourably settling the station dispute.

The station location came before council quickly, at their second meeting. On May 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1915, Hansard appeared before council and told them he wanted an immediate decision on the issue—a decision in favour of the railway.\textsuperscript{25} Specifically, Hansard wanted the council’s support in yet another appeal to the Board of Railway Commissioners, and was confident that if mayor and council strongly supported him the issue could be resolved for good. The aldermen strongly supported the GTP, but the mayor was strongly opposed. Gillett argued that supporting the GTP would violate his political platform and if council supported the GTP he would resign.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{21} \textit{Fort George Herald}, May 7, 1915, 2.
\bibitem{22} Ibid.
\bibitem{23} \textit{Fort George Tribune}, May 22, 1915, 1.
\bibitem{24} \textit{Fort George Herald}, May 21, 1915, 1.
\bibitem{25} Prince George City Council, \textit{Minutes of the Regular Meetings of the City of Prince George held in the Council Chambers of City Hall} (Prince George: City Hall, May 31, 1915).
\bibitem{26} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
Gillett could not be allowed to step down. His economic clout had secured an operating loan for the municipality during a poor economic climate. Everyone knew that financial chaos would ensue if Gillett quit because Gillett made it quite clear the loan would be recalled if he resigned. However, Gillett decided not to quit but simply refused to support council’s position on this issue, effectively washing his hands of the problem. With this hostility began Prince George’s first City Council.

Prince George’s divided council was really the ultimate reflection of an old, bitter, dispute between two rival communities. It was a dispute that was fought weekly through their two rival newspapers and demonstrated the competing economic interests of Central Fort George and Prince George. But while the battle between these communities formed the primary conflict in the station location dispute, an important secondary conflict developed as well. This minor conflict was in Prince George’s frustration with the GTP for its refusal to compromise on the station location, thereby hindering the local economy. Like the primary dispute, this secondary conflict was also represented in the local newspapers, albeit in milder fashion.

Aggravating Prince George’s frustration with the GTP was a weak and cyclical local economy. Following Prince George’s incorporation, the community benefited from a population increase. This was due to a mass exodus from both Central Fort George and South Fort George. These local migrants either purchased land in Prince George, or more frequently moved onto lots which they had purchased for bargain prices during Prince George’s land sale. These bargain prices were partly due to the questionable timing of the land sale and partly due to Prince George’s weak economy.

---

27 Christensen, 44.
28 See Chapter Five for a more extended discussion of this topic.
Prince George’s first serious depression put the town in quite a precarious position. Although boom and bust cycles were common in most resource towns of that time, Prince George was in a unique position. Gordon Hak has demonstrated this by showing that the vast majority of Prince George workers came in the winter from the prairies, but only if the prairie economy was faring well enough to employ them in the summer. Therefore, the early Prince George economy was doubly-dependent—both dependent on the Prince George economy and on the prairie economy. This boom and bust cycle began at the onset of World War I, when the lumber market dropped off and the economic importance of the railway decreased. In October of 1916, the economy started to recover but then, in 1921, depression arrived in Prince George. These spurts of success and failure prevented Prince George from developing or attracting any stable, long-term industry. In fact, until a pulp mill was built in 1966, the economy of Prince George exactly mirrored the annual record of lumber production. Clearly, this was a fragile, one-industry, economy.

The fragility of the Prince George economy was like that of similar towns across the Prairie West. Although Prince George is not part of the Prairie West, it followed a similar cycle of urbanisation and development led by railway construction. Paul Phillips has identified the period from 1901—1911 as a time when urbanisation grew and distinct economic centres, such as Winnipeg, appeared. Thus, Prince George’s peripheral economic status is not surprising given the rise of several economic centres across the Prairies. The Prince George experience is also typical of the experience of single-industry

---

31 Ibid., 24, 31.
32 Christensen, 110.
railway resource towns in Northern Ontario, although these towns may not have been “doubly dependent,” as Prince George was. Oiva Saarinen has studied Northern Ontario resource towns and found six characteristics of them which are generally quite applicable to Prince George as well. These characteristics are a small population, slow growth, isolation, limited hinterlands, a narrow economic base, and a poorly developed physical and sociocultural infrastructure. Many of these characteristics applied to early Prince George and perhaps even apply now, showing that the Prince George experience is part of a bigger picture, where fragile economies and economic dependence are common in single-sector railway towns.

Both major historical accounts demonstrate the weak wartime economy of Prince George. Bev Christiansen writes that the construction boom soon died, because the war caused a localised depression in Prince George. Runnalls recounts that the decline of land values began after the outbreak of war, and “fifteen months after the Government [land] sale most of the lots, which had sold for hundreds of dollars, were assessed at from $50 to $100.” The economy continued to stagnate, and in 1915 “building in the new town was also at a standstill, so crowds of disillusioned and unemployed men and women began moving out to try and find opportunities elsewhere.” The picture brightened somewhat in late 1916, when lumber production in the region began increasingly steadily until 1928. Despite this, in 1918, the *Prince George Citizen* ran twelve full pages of property seizure notices for unpaid municipal taxes, indicating that any growth in the lumber industry must have

---

35 Christiansen, 44, 75.
36 Runnalls, 137–138.
38 Runnalls, 159.
been exceedingly modest.⁵⁹ Although the city later recorded $22,000 in revenue from the subsequent land sales, there were serious economic problems that caused owners to forfeit so many lots in the final year of the war.⁶⁰ Though the First World War aided the local economy, the war did not have the same catalytic effect that it did in large manufacturing centres, and Prince George’s economy remained feeble.

Within this weak economic context, Prince George’s first City Council was elected. Council was expected to improve the community, whose citizens had high hopes for the development initiatives promised by the railway. Early in the station location dispute, the vice-president of the GTP had assured the Herald that a permanent station—once the location was agreed upon—would reward Prince George economically.⁶¹ At that time people probably believed him. But by 1916, City Council was much more sceptical of the long-term benefits of a permanent station, since they had lived with a fully-functioning temporary one for the last three years. Hence, when Hansard appeared before council, the aldermen demanded specific promises from him, and unfortunately for the alderman, Hansard refused to be specific.

During the all-important council meeting of May 31, 1915, aldermen repeatedly questioned Hansard about the building cost for the proposed station. Hansard could only reply that, “the proposed station would not be lower in standard than those at McBride, Endako, and other points,”⁶² hardly an encouraging remark, since Prince George was intended to be much larger and more important. The aldermen repeatedly questioned the station cost, probably because they knew the long-term economic benefit of a real station

---

⁵⁹ Prince George Citizen, July 23, 1918, 5.
⁶⁰ Ibid., 1.
⁶¹ Fort George Herald, June 7, 1913, 1.
⁶² Prince George City Council, June 1, 1915.
would be fairly minimal. Even at that, Hansard refused to guarantee that the railway would build the station with local labour.\textsuperscript{43}

Another bone of contention also dated back to 1913, when the GTP announced that it was planning a $200 000 hotel to be located next to the George Street station.\textsuperscript{44} There is no doubt the railway company originally planned to build a hotel but, because the hotel had not yet been built, the company hoped that hotel construction could be a bargaining chip in the station dispute. In 1914, the hotel was still being planned and the company hoped to start construction that winter.\textsuperscript{45} But at some point before May of 1915 the hotel idea was shelved, with Hansard explaining that the railway did not want to compete with the hotels that already existed, which was clearly true but disappointing nonetheless.\textsuperscript{46}

By January, 1917 a railway-friendly council had finally been elected. It was led by the euphoniously-named Harry Perry, Prince George’s second mayor. This pleased the \textit{Prince George Star}, and it anticipated a speedy end to the station location dispute.\textsuperscript{47} Although the \textit{Prince George Citizen} did not support Perry, it too believed that the next council needed to cooperate with the railway.\textsuperscript{48} The new mayor and council were eager to please the railway, but by then the railway was not in a financial position to fulfill any previous offers. The temporary station still remained, and frustration was increasingly directed at the Grand Trunk Pacific rather than City Council.\textsuperscript{49} After four years there was still no grand station, no posh hotel, but only a weak economy based not on agriculture but on the forest industry. It is no surprise that Prince George, through their newspapers, expressed some frustration with the Grand Trunk Pacific.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Fort George Herald}, May 24, 1913, 1.
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Fort George Herald}, March 28, 1914, 1. \textit{Fort George Herald}, November 7, 1914, 1.
\textsuperscript{46} Smelts, 42.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Prince George Star}, January 12, 1917, 1.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Prince George Citizen}, December 15, 1916, 2.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., October 15, 1918, 2.
While frustration characterised the secondary conflict in the station location dispute, this conflict was completely overshadowed by the outright hostility between the newspapers over the primary conflict. Central Fort George and Prince George were competing interest groups with competing economic needs and competing newspapers. The dispute between them was long, bitter, and acrimonious. It was also closely linked to incorporation fight, which will be examined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

Prince George's Incorporation Fight

As well as disputing the station location, the three Georges—Central Fort George, South Fort George, and Prince George—also fought over incorporation. Who could incorporate what, and why they would want to? Incorporation was a powerful tool that could be used to better a fledgling community, and if there was any opportunity both Central Fort George and Prince George, the Tribune and the Herald, wanted a part in it. Had the drive for incorporation happened earlier, both communities may have had a fairer chance at incorporating. But because the incorporation push happened in 1914, the influence of Central Fort George had begun to wane and the fight over the proposed incorporation boundaries for Prince George was an unsuccessful last attempt by the Tribune to minimise the drop of property values in Central Fort George.

The primary conflict in the history of Prince George's incorporation was between Central Fort George and Prince George, as the people of Central Fort George and their Tribune fought against the Provincial Government, the people of Prince George, and the Grand Trunk Pacific to save the money invested in Central Fort George land. Many people's fortunes were invested in Central Fort George, and they desperately wanted a stake in the future—perhaps achievable through incorporation. The economic uncertainty from the station location dispute was serving nobody's interests, and both sides were eager for autonomy and change.

As Bev Christensen writes, "it became apparent [to Prince George residents] that only the incorporation of a city would give local citizens the power they needed to have the station built adjacent to most of the community's businesses, which were now located on
Residents of Central Fort George were interested in incorporation too, although with a different result in mind.

The communities wanted incorporation for other reasons as well. The most practical benefit of incorporation was that incorporated communities could tax their citizens to provide municipal services and infrastructure.\(^2\) Central Fort George already provided some services that were funded by the NRS to encourage development, but Hammond and his residents clearly wanted to develop a tax base. Meanwhile, South Fort George and Prince George residents wanted to share in any improvements that might be happening, as well as building their own tax base.

In 1914 The Joint Incorporation Committee was formed to explore the options of somehow uniting all three.\(^3\) However, the railway company was strongly against this idea and only wanted Prince George, their official townsite, to incorporate.\(^4\) This caused a great deal of frustration for land owners in South Fort George and Central Fort George, who were both cognisant of the material benefits of incorporation.\(^5\)

Early in the joint incorporation process South Fort George decided to leave the committee. The South Fort George contingent argued that for their community the costs of incorporation would outweigh the benefits. In the words of one South Fort George resident, “incorporation with Prince George now would be a hardship on South Fort George... there would be no adequate return to property owners.”\(^6\) These owners felt that “the rate of taxation [was prohibitively] high to improve the large undeveloped area lying in between” South Fort George and Prince George. Moreover, South Fort George property

---

1 Christensen, 41.
5 *Fort George Tribune*, November 21, 1914, 1.
6 *Fort George Herald*, January 2, 1915, 1.
owners felt they could not profit from united municipal services because of this undeveloped land.7

After this, the battle was between Central Fort George and Prince George, with the GTP looming in the background. Surprisingly, the provincial government then resurfaced and sent a civil engineer to investigate the practical considerations of incorporation. The engineer found a lack of fresh water in Central Fort George, which would have meant constructing a reservoir at a distant lake or digging a deep, high-capacity well—both very expensive options.8 This effectively buttressed the GTP’s case to incorporate Prince George alone.

Despite this negative assessment, Central Fort George landowners still wanted their townsite included in the incorporation area. Sources vary in their description of what happened next. According to Leonard, the GTP sabotaged the work of the Joint Incorporation Committee.9 According to the Fort George Tribune, the Prince George contingent pulled out.10 But, according to the Fort George Herald, it was the Central Fort George contingent that pulled out.11 Something happened however, and it caused the Prince George contingent decided to apply for incorporation independently.12 This was quickly granted, and the Grand Trunk Pacific achieved its objective by having Prince George, and only Prince George, incorporated on March 6th, 1915. The railway company hoped the station location dispute would be quickly and favourably resolved, but it was not to be.

Central Fort George, through the Tribune, was probably very unhappy with this turn of events. Unfortunately however, copies of the Tribune are not available from January 23,

7 Ibid.
8 Smelts, 48.
10 Fort George Tribune, January 16, 1915, 1.
11 Fort George Herald, January 16, 1915, 1.
12 Ibid., 3.
1915 to May 15, 1915. Given the emotional intensity leading up to this defeat, anger and resentment against Prince George and the GTP likely ran high. Central Fort George, represented by Harry Perry, already suspected the GTP of manipulating the Prince George contingent of the Joint Incorporation Committee. Earlier in the year he was quoted in the Tribune as saying, “I maintain that the people of this district have rights notwithstanding the fact that the Grand Trunk Pacific seem to think otherwise…” When Central Fort George lost the bid for incorporation, emotions must have run very high indeed—especially as the reality sunk in that the real estate investment of many residents had become almost worthless.

Aside from this primary conflict, there was also a secondary conflict between the people of Prince George and the railway. Specifically, Prince George residents and the Herald were frustrated with the GTP for laying down so many conditions for Prince George’s incorporation, thereby worsening the split in an already fractious council. This frustration may be due to some of the many problems with the Grand Trunk Pacific that Frank Leonard has studied. However, knowing why this so requires a more thorough understanding of Grand Trunk Pacific economic history.

During the early 1900s and up to 1916, railways were powerful and popular. During this great era of railroad construction, Prime Minister Laurier and Premier McBride funded a number of railways like the GTP. However, with the 1914 financial collapse brought on by World War I, governmental priorities quickly went elsewhere and the GTP began a five year descent into insolvency.

---

13 *Fort George Tribune*, January 16, 1915, 1.
By itself, a lack of money would not necessarily detract from the GTP's influence in Prince George. The cash flow problem was enhanced because little freight needed to be shipped, the railway was not permitted to raise shipping fees, and governments were too preoccupied with the war to bail the railway out once again. When the Grand Trunk Pacific was finally completed in 1914 it was 200% over budget.\textsuperscript{15} Prime Minister Borden even had to initiate a Royal Commission to exonerate his government from any wrongdoing. Where railways had been previously viewed as miraculous catalysts to the economy, they were now viewed with suspicion. Politicians now tended to view them as costly, inefficient, and largely ineffective. However, they also felt an extreme “disinclination to raise freight costs,” which was unpopular with voters and would only slow down the rate at which railways lost money.\textsuperscript{16} This strategy hastened the inevitable bankruptcy of the GTP.

To make matters worse, much of the traffic the GTP optimistically predicted for its western line never materialised. Amazingly, Charles Hays' traffic predictions for the GTP were 40% higher than the actual traffic on the Canadian Pacific, which had been established decades earlier.\textsuperscript{17} In Prince Rupert, the railway sank a great deal of money into dry-dock facilities, shipyards, and cold-storage plants, but the freight never came. This situation was obviously made worse by the war and the financial collapse, but at the time it was simply too expensive to ship through the port of Prince Rupert and there was no competitive need for private companies to do so.\textsuperscript{18}

Frank Leonard's complex analysis of GTP traffic records explains how slow the railway business was. Specifically, Leonard shows that traffic along the GTP's British Columbia section actually dropped during the first three years of World War I. In addition,

\textsuperscript{15} Robert Legget, \textit{Railways of Canada} (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1973), 129.
\textsuperscript{16} Leonard, \textit{A Thousand Blunders}, 244.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 65.
“most freight was hauled across the Prairie Section” and not through Prince George. The GTP was also unsuccessful at attracting foreign traffic through the port of Prince Rupert, which had been necessary for the GTP to justify the construction cost. Furthermore, because the government would not allow carriage rates to increase, and costs inevitably increased, the GTP lost money during every year of World War I, except 1915. The First World War clearly brought no benefit to the railway.

In Prince George, the GTP’s only substantial freight was lumber and during the war the demand for lumber fell dramatically, before beginning to recover in October, 1916. Moreover, the GTP never profited from the same monetarily beneficial land grants the Canadian Pacific Railway had enjoyed decades earlier, further harming the railway’s bottom line. The GTP cash flow problems surfaced in Prince George as early as 1915, when the provincial government was forced to feed a number of GTP employees, whom the company could not afford to pay. Clearly, financial problems were an increasing burden for the Grand Trunk Pacific.

The GTP was also affected by the war in ways that were not directly financial. Labour shortages had been a problem for the company since the beginning, even before the war, because the use of Asian labour was politically unpopular. Although the company continuously campaigned to be permitted to hire Asian labourers, the provincial government was strongly and consistently opposed to this. The war exacerbated the labour shortage, with many young, unmarried men—who would have otherwise worked for the railway—

---

19 Leonard, A Thousand Blunders, 250.
20 Ibid., 253.
21 Ibid., 251.
22 Bernsohn, 24. Incidentally, the lumber was shipped to the Prairies and not through Prince Rupert.
23 George Buck, From Summit to Sea: An Illustrated History of Railroads in British Columbia and Alberta (Calgary: Fifth House, 1997), 71.
24 Fort George Herald, April 23, 1915, 1.
volunteering to fight in the war. In effect, the GTP and the Army were competing with each other for labourers at a time when the GTP was already understaffed.

Frank Leonard also argues that the GTP suffered from poor management. In fact, Leonard goes so far as to argue that poor management was a GTP trademark. He writes:

the actions of [President] Hays and other company officers hastened the company's failure in British Columbia by increasing its losses. At the senior level, management decisions concerning acquisitions of the Pacific terminus, construction, and labour relations created in large part the onerous financial obligations that brought on the company's collapse.

It appears that Leonard's mismanagement thesis may have been commonly accepted at the time. The Prince George Star seemed to acknowledge as much when it argued in November, 1916 that the GTP should not be privatised, but simply better managed. These managerial problems may have been at the root of the frustration between Prince George's City Council and the GTP. An effective case study of this frustration is found in the land use restrictions the GTP tried to impose on particular lots in the Prince George townsite.

The GTP, for their part, may have had progressive urban planning on their side. The layout of Prince George was based on a particular school of urban design that required land use restrictions. This school of design was called "City Beautiful," and it requires a brief explanation.

City Beautiful was a revolutionary movement in urban design. Its promoters achieved much right across North America, and they created a legacy of integrated urban planning that persists to this day. In the late 1980s the recognised authority on the history of City Beautiful, William Wilson, published a seminal work on the movement, detailing the

26 Leonard, A Thousand Blunders, 7.
theory and history of it as well as the short-term effect of City Beautiful on a variety of American cities.

Wilson describes City Beautiful as an attempt by “middle- and upper-middle-class Americans…to refashion their cities into beautiful functional entities.” By designing cities comprehensively, and using civic centres, parks and boulevard systems to instil civic pride, Americans hoped to rediscover their glorious past. They wanted to recreate the “more stable, moral age” that was threatened by mechanisation and economic inequality.

The City Beautiful developed in the United States at roughly the same time (the late 1800s) as a similar movement, the Garden City ideal, developed in the United Kingdom. The fundamental difference between the two is that while City Beautiful design focused on improving a city, Garden City planners wanted to construct healthy communities separate from an urban centre. The two movements are quite distinct because in the early stages of City Beautiful development, Charles Mulford Robinson, “rejected the radical utopianism of the Garden City ideal in favour of the drastic improvement of existing cities.”

Although not a professional architect, Robinson was the honorary leader of the City Beautiful movement. His book, *Modern Civic Art or The City Made Beautiful*, provided the moral motivation for the movement by linking City Beautiful design to the progressive reform movements of the 1890s. Robinson argued in this book that “civic art” and comprehensive design would improve the living and working conditions of everyone, particularly the poor. He wrote:

---

31 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 73.
For what higher call has civic art than to make beautiful the surroundings of the homes of men; to make refined, lovely, and truly lovable, that environment in which they have leisure for enjoyment and for misery, and where are reared and taught by sense impressions the children who will be future citizens.\(^{33}\)

By “civic art,” Robinson meant building awe-inspiring civic structures, planning parks and parkways for recreation, and reducing population density in inner cities so people could enjoy all this art without being crowded.

Robinson inspired a generation of designers, who created plans for the improvement of cities right across the United States. The cities of Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, New York, Washington, Seattle, Denver, and many others crafted City Beautiful designs. In many places popular reformers rallied around a city plan, demonstrating that City Beautiful was more than just a school of design—it was an urban reform movement. Robinson wrote that civic art is a “sort of social reformer,” improving living conditions through aesthetics.\(^{34}\)

This belief was based on the Progressive idea that social problems were derived largely from the environment and that if healthy bodies could be made, then sane minds would follow.\(^{35}\)

City Beautiful designers therefore tried to change a city’s appearance for the better and in doing so simultaneously improve public health, reduce crime,\(^{36}\) and develop civic pride.\(^{37}\)

City Beautiful was therefore not designed to create cities, but rather to preserve, enhance, and improve what was already there.\(^{38}\)


\(^{34}\) Ibid., 58.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 245. See also Burditt, W.F. “Civic Efficiency and Social Welfare in Planning of Land,” in *Saving the Canadian City*, ed. Paul Rutherford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 245.

\(^{36}\) Clifford Sifton, “Address of Welcome to the City Planning Conference,” in *Saving the Canadian City*, ed. Paul Rutherford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 214, 217.


One of the leading City Beautiful designers of the late 19th century was Frederick Law Olmsted, whose work made him the father of landscape architecture. According to Wilson, Olmsted made three fundamental contributions to urban planning. He understood the ideology of City Beautiful by planning comprehensive, multi-purpose parks. He provided some inspiration for City Beautiful planners by arguing that parks increased land values, and people's quality of life. And finally, Olmsted left a legacy of action by starting the practice of hiring landscape architects as consultants. Although Robinson provided the impetus for City Beautiful thought, it was Olmsted who crafted the intellectual and practical legacy of City Beautiful planning.

Despite Olmsted's professional contributions, it is important to remember that City Beautiful was still largely a grassroots movement. It was an idea that people rallied around to improve their communities—and its success or failure depended on public support. It succeeded when citizens accepted the "social improvement through civic art" mentality, and personally worked to improve their city. The necessary groundswell of public opinion in favour of a City Beautiful took the form of improvement societies. Some societies "campaigned to eliminate factory pollution, ugly billboards, unsightly fences, overhead electrical wires, and street refuse. Others planted trees, shrubs, and flower beds along city streets, cleaned up alleys and vacant lots, and sponsored home beautification contests." City Beautiful was not made up just of landscape architects and it was not just concerned citizens; it was a cooperative community effort. What it absolutely required though, was a cooperative community.

40 Ibid., 34.
41 Ibid., 1.
42 Boyer, 263.
Almost every city that had a successful City Beautiful movement also had a strong champion of the plan, often one who came from a social reform background as well as a professional one. For example in Denver, Colorado, Mayor Robert Speer worked tirelessly, personally exhibiting "the human spirit that City Beautiful sought to celebrate and ennoble."^{43}

The City Beautiful plan for Toledo, Ohio was also strongly supported by its mayor—Brand Whitlock. He believed that City Beautiful design expressed "that divine craving in mankind for harmony, for beauty, for order, which is the democratic spirit."^{44} In San Francisco it was James Duval Phelan, who "stands among the leading proponents of the City Beautiful...For Phelan...individual efforts needed an overall design to be most effective."^{45} George Edward Kessler was a City Beautiful booster from the St. Louis reform movement. Kessler and his Civic Improvement League, "contributed particular time, energy, and thought to the 1907 [St. Louis] plan..."^{46} This sentiment applies equally across North America for every other champion of City Beautiful design.

In the most successful City Beautiful scenarios, the booster encouraged a neighbourhood effort based partly on the principles of the reform movement and partly on a city's individualised plan. As Robert Russell states, "A plan is a wonderful thing to have. It can galvanise public opinion and provide a concrete direction for what might otherwise be vague enthusiasm."^{47} This is what happened right across America in cities that implemented

---

City Beautiful design. City Beautiful is perhaps the only architectural movement to be driven largely by non-professionals.48

Although City Beautiful was a fundamentally grassroots movement, it was still very political because enacting comprehensive planning (the integral part of City Beautiful) required a comprehensive control of development and construction standards.49 One of the most frequently cited examples of a successful City Beautiful design is the MacMillan Plan in Washington, D.C. The plan, prepared by Daniel Burnham and several other designers, was an update of the previous L'Enfant design.50 The MacMillan Plan was quickly implemented because Washington "was an autocracy as complete as the administration of the world's fair [in Chicago]."51 In other words, the political power necessary for implementing City Beautiful design was more centralised in Washington, in the hands of a congressional committee, than in any other American city. The zoning regulations, building height limitations, city infrastructure, and park creation all required political power as well as money. Washington, D.C. had both.

Eventually City Beautiful design faded from public interest. With the onset of the First World War, citizens had more pressing concerns than social welfare and urban art. Furthermore, since city designers often had a vision of urban life that "was far removed from the harsh reality of tenements and sweatshops," civic art improvements did not solve problems as quickly as its supporters had hoped."52 Those who expressly disagreed with

51 Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 68. See also Peterson, 3.
City Beautiful design saw it as empty aesthetics, a disproportionate focus on monumental buildings with impractical design elements, and too much public money spent to please the rich. These critics argued that money spent on City Beautiful design elements could be better spent on infrastructure expansion and suburban development. Eventually the City Beautiful faded from popularity, but not before introducing comprehensive planning, zoning regulations, and construction standards to North America and the world.

In Canada, the impact of City Beautiful design was dramatically smaller than in the United States. The City Beautiful movement in Canada never achieved the same popularity it enjoyed south of the border. The best known Canadian example of City Beautiful design occurred in Ottawa where the federal government commissioned a 1915 City Beautiful plan for Ottawa and Hull to mirror the successfully completed City Beautiful design for Washington, D.C. However, as David Gordon writes, “it was shelved shortly after it was released. The plan was dogged by a fire in the Parliament Buildings, a European war, poor implementation provisions and reaction against its City Beautiful urban design recommendations.” Moreover, the City Beautiful concept was intellectually passé by 1915 in Canada. How City Beautiful arrived in Prince George is therefore by a very circuitous route, partly because City Beautiful was usually used to improve big cities, not to create little railroad towns.

53 Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement, 285.
55 Ibid., 205. Also Scott, 80.
Most Western Canadian railroad towns were planned by the railroad companies themselves, which applied the same standard grid design to every town along its tracks. This was particularly true with the Grand Trunk Pacific Corporation, which cloned identical railway townsites along its entire line, but it was true with other Canadian railways as well, particularly the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway (T&NO), an understanding of which helps contextualise the Grand Trunk Pacific’s approach.

On the surface, the planning of the T&NO (which eventually became The Ontario Northland Railway), appears to have had much in common with the GTP. It did not. However, the economic purpose of both railways was identical—to open up the North for resource extraction. Unlike the GTP however, the T&NO succeeded at this almost immediately, making money and lots of it. The silver discovered at Cobalt in 1907 sustained the railway and paid for it many times over, because the railway controlled mining rights. As a result, the T&NO also enjoyed a great deal of control over their towns—certainly much more control than the GTP. The planning influences in the design of T&NO towns were also different, according to Oiva Saarinen, who argues that the “Garden City” movement influenced the design of several towns along the line. Saarinen also has specifically examined the planning of single-sector resource towns in Northern Ontario and concludes that even when a pre-World War I town was planned it was only with the imposition of a standard grid design.

58 Gilpin, 260.
For reasons that remain unclear, the GTP went against years of tradition and avoided using standard grid designs—at least in Prince George and Prince Rupert. In 1908 the GTP decided that it would make more money from land sales if it created unique town layouts. Both Prince George and Prince Rupert were planned individually, by the Chicago architecture firm of Brett, Hall & Company. Franklin Brett and George Hall were students of a prestigious City Beautiful designer and according to geographer J. Kent Sedgwick, their resulting streetscape heavily incorporated City Beautiful design elements.

Although the Prince George plan was only partially implemented, Sedgwick describes it as follows (see figure 4.1):

George Street is the main commercial thoroughfare with the railway station at one end and Princess Square containing city hall at the other. Leading westward from city hall, at right angles to George Street, is Seventh Avenue which was intended to be the other major thoroughfare.

Seventh terminated in Duchess Park at the centre of the “crescents.” The crescents are four, concentric, semi-circular, residential streets which geometrically surround Duchess Park and neatly terminate the straight portions of the road between Third and 11th Avenues.

Another element of the plan was a curved parkway, Patricia Boulevard, which led to Connaught Park. At the intersection of Patricia Boulevard and Victoria Street was a traffic circle that contained Alfred Park. The names of the parks and boulevards are associated with the family of the governor-general the Duke of Connaught, who was a strong supporter of town planning.

---

62 Gilpin, 260.
63 Note that the earlier design for Prince Rupert was well received in the Fort George Herald, September 7, 1912, 1.
65 Ibid.
Figure 4.1: Prince George's City Beautiful Plan

---

66 Fort George Herald, April 12, 1913, 1.
While this City Beautiful plan existed on paper, it also existed within a school of landscape design which had very specific ideas on how certain lands should be used. After all, according to City Beautiful advocates a city was an opportunity to create urban art and inspire the populace, thereby minimising social problems and improving everyone’s quality of life. In presenting the plan for Prince George, the railway hoped the spirit of the plan would be preserved—parks would stay parks, public squares would be natural gathering points, and the main entry to the town would have City Hall at one end and the train station at the other, forming a sort of grand promenade. Thus, it is no surprise that the GTP tried to preserve some aspects of their plan for Prince George.

Still, it was a surprise for Prince George’s first City Council when the GTP tried to impose conditions on City Council, much as they had done with the Joint Incorporation Committee. These conditions were as follows:

1. That the railway company would lease to Prince George, for 999 years at $1 per year, the land for the city hall and several parks. However, the land could only be used for these specific purposes (park or city hall), as shown in the Brett & Hall city plan.

2. That the city would agree to support the GTP in another appeal to the Board of Railway Commissioners. The City would support having the station location relocated to George Street.

3. The Railway agreed to construct a George Street station as soon as the Board gave it permission.

4. The agreement would extend to all successors of both parties.67

---

The railway company’s proposed agreement caused much doubt in council because the GTP expected a great deal but refused to make any reciprocal promises. Hansard’s list of conditions made no reference to yard improvement or hotel construction, both of which were important for the city’s future. The aldermen were justifiably concerned about this. Apart from building the station, the only bargaining chip held by the GTP was the threat to foreclose on those who had not yet paid for their lots, and the ability to give free land to the city for a school or town hall. Council certainly had some stake in both issues, but neither would do much for the Prince George economy, which was suffering by this point.

This frustration with the GTP was minor though, when compared to the much more pervasive conflict—the fight over the proposed incorporation boundaries. This was a fight for the economic survival of Central Fort George, as land owners for that area sought to preserve the value of their investments by incorporating their community along with the official GTP townsite of Prince George. Despite the efforts of Central Fort George and the Tribune, their fight was lost and Prince George soon became the predominant George, of the three initial Georges. However, the process of Prince George’s growth to predominance illustrates a final battle between competing local interests, as will be shown in the final chapter.

---

69 *Prince George City Council, August 2, 1916.*
CHAPTER FIVE
The Unusual Promotion of Prince George

According to Frederick Talbot, Prince George cabbages not only weigh 20 lbs, but they grow “to such a size that it is only just possible to put the two arms round a single plant.” This was an obvious exaggeration and it was joined by many other exaggerations in the early promotion of Prince George. While writers have had fun with silly claims like Talbot’s, they have often missed the counterproductive nature of these advertising statements. For every exaggerated claim about Prince George, there was a public denunciation of that claim as well as of the person making it.

As already seen, much of the tension in Prince George was between two competing groups—Central Fort George and Prince George—and the tension was played out in their respective newspapers—the Tribune and the Herald. Because these competing towns wanted to promote and develop their community, and only their community, they used the newspapers and other media to promote their region in different ways, particularly in ways designed to be harmful to their rivals.

The primary conflict was between Central Fort George and Prince George. The NRS and Central Fort George continually sought to exaggerate the benefits of the region, igniting the ire of Prince George and the GTP which argued that exaggerations would only hinder the region in the long-run. The history of exaggerated claims also prompted the railway to publicly distance themselves from the advertising of the NRS. Before this can be shown, however, the promotion and development attempts of both interests must be examined.

1 Fort George Herald, April 1, 1911.
The promotion of Prince George began with the building of the GTP. The first wave of migration to the city was made up of the workers and support staff who began construction of the railway. By 1909, sternwheeler ships had begun regular service between Soda Creek and Fort George, bringing in people and supplies for the railway. Because B.C.'s Land Act required that pre-emption claims be advertised in a local newspaper, sufficient market existed for the founding of the *Fort George Tribune* in 1909 and the *Fort George Herald* in 1911.

The earliest impact of the newspapers was on the vision of Prince George in the future. Prince George newspapers confidently predicted a prosperous future. With the railway came settlers, labourers and land speculators, and with these people came increased communication. The goal of both these newspapers, apart from making money, was to publicise the region and encourage settlement and investment.

Frequent newspaper articles further extolled the benefits of the Prince George region. For example, under the headline “Mud River Cry: ‘Grow Oats,’” the article read: “This valuable product is not the only thing that will sprout…during several seasons past it has been demonstrated that the territory can raise vegetables to stack up to anything that can be bought.” As well, the newspapers were often rife with new development rumours. In “Beaver Farm Would Pay,” the writer suggests that “if Ontario can do this” then Fort George could also have a profitable beaver farm.

Optimism for a prosperous future was also depicted within the broader network of books and magazines. In *The Making of a Great Canadian Railway* Frederick Talbot wrote, “the
interior is nothing but one huge garden.” In another publication he predicted that Prince George “cannot help becoming the capital city of New British Columbia.” While this optimism was mainly directed at residents living outside of Prince George, both books were popular here as well, receiving much coverage in the local press. Magazines also sold the future of this region. In British Columbia Magazine, Marshall Douglas wrote that the Prince George region “represents the final opportunity for the people of the world to secure rich and inexpensive agricultural lands.” He went on to predict that “the richest agricultural valleys and timbered and mineralized mountains [will be a] coming Mecca for farmers and miners, and the great army of settlers who build up communities and reap the rewards.” Douglas meant to sow this seed of optimism across all of Canada, but the place where his optimism most quickly took root was right in Prince George.

Frederick Talbot, who appears to have been connected with the GTP, also wrote The New Garden of Canada, a surprisingly balanced portrayal of Fort George life. He encouraged immigrants by claiming that “labour was scarce and wages were heavy...There was no such thing as charity for the unemployed as the demand for labour far exceeded the supply.” Talbot’s view was not consistently rosy, though. He also wrote, “Fort George was a ‘dry’ town—officially. Actually it was ‘wetter’ than a licensed community bristling with gin-palaces.” The author also mentioned gambling in Fort George, as well as the extremely high cost of living. The book’s discussion of life here was clearly not fanciful or overly flattering.

---

7 Talbot, The New Garden of Canada, 162.
9 Douglas, 40.
10 Talbot, The New Garden of Canada, 166.
11 Ibid., 168.
While Talbot’s even-handed portrayal seems more reliable to those researching the topic, it probably did little to attract people—other than adventurous, single men—to Fort George. The railway needed single men for construction, but what the Grand Trunk Pacific really needed was families who would buy land and develop it, enhancing the economy in the long term. This hope for Prince George is again found in British Columbia Magazine. In it, John Ridington wrote, “Prosperous farmers from Iowa and other rich central agricultural states have sold their holdings at big prices and are now tilling infinitely more fertile lands, secured at a mere fraction of the cost, in the regions adjacent to Fort George...Practically inexhaustible lime and shale deposits have been discovered within fifty miles of Fort George, and in the future this district ought to rank as one of the great cement-producing sections of the continent.” Ridington’s optimistic prose was more typical of the speculation companies’ advertising for Fort George than Talbot’s more balanced work for the railway. In fact, most Fort George promotion in the earliest phase of development came not from the railway but from development companies, much to the chagrin of the GTP.

The Grand Trunk Pacific could not afford to be overshadowed by local development interests. By the late 1800s it was common knowledge that a successful railway would develop and promote the towns along its rail line. Railways focussed on immigration and promotion because it made them money. In fact, it was one of the few things a fledgling railway could do to make money. Railways have been, and continue to be, very expensive to build. As a result, it often takes railways decades to turn a profit, if they ever do. Given the long-term investment that a railway necessitates, a railway’s initial objective is to minimise loss, rather than maximise gain. In the case of Canadian railways, loss was best minimised by both selling land and encouraging development.

Since railways constituted such a powerful catalyst for development, the placement of individual stations—and towns by extension—was a very important decision.\(^{13}\) The placement was important because railway companies wanted to sell the land as dearly as possible, for “townsite promotion was a profitable enterprise.”\(^{14}\) The problem for railways was that others tried to profit too. Local speculation companies tried to make money by buying cheap lots and selling them at inflated prices because of the lots’ proximity to the railway. This speculation was widespread during all of Canada’s railway booms, and the GTP was certainly no exception. Railway companies fought this threat by closely guarding their planned location for a station. By being secretive in this way, the railway hoped to buy all available land in the station area, giving the railway company an effective monopoly on land sales.

While promotion of a town was important for minimising losses, to ensure long-term success railways needed to encourage immigration and settlement. This effort would both increase land sales and increase development in a region, eventually leading to more railway traffic. For example, in thinly populated Montana, the Great Northern Railway hired agents to encourage immigration to the region, and between 1910 and 1920 “tens of thousands of settlers flocked to Montana”\(^{15}\) because of the railway’s “vigorous advertising program.”\(^{16}\) This immigration brought agriculture and the development of Montana’s hinterland.\(^{17}\) In Montana’s case, immigration and promotion was vital to the railway.

\(^{13}\) Ron Brown, _The Train Doesn’t Stop Here Anymore: An Illustrated History of Railway Stations in Canada_ (Toronto, Lynx Images, 1998), 41.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., 65.
\(^{17}\) Ibid.
Although it sounds clichéd, successful railways did not just build railways, they built railway economies.

Immigration and promotion were therefore vital to the success of a young railway. However, according to historian George Buck, the GTP suffered from two disadvantages when compared to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). First, the land grants given to the GTP by the government were not as generous and valuable as those given to the CPR. This made it more difficult for the Grand Trunk Pacific to promote their land and attract immigrants and easier for speculation companies to compete. Because the GTP was granted relatively small tracts of land for its townsites, development companies could easily purchase adjacent land and sell it to speculators who were confident the GTP would build nearby. The second disadvantage of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was that they were accountable to the Board of Railway Commissioners, which oversaw decisions about station placements and carriage fees. This was a form of intrusion the pioneering Canadian Pacific never had to endure. The board harmed the GTP’s immigration and promotion strategy by interfering in decisions, notably the Prince George station location. Compared to the CPR, the Grand Trunk Pacific began life at a considerable disadvantage. Other railways from the era, particularly the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario (T&NO), also appreciated the importance of both immigration and promotion.

The T&NO made a consistent and organised effort to attract immigrants and promote its communities. Their promotion was, of course, boosted by the vast quantities of mineral wealth discovered in Northern Ontario, but it is indicative that the railway still worked to promote itself, despite this economic boom. The commission in charge of the T&NO opened a land department in 1908, which surveyed lots, planned townsites, and

---

16 Buck, 71.
advertised. The land department also targeted recently arrived immigrants, attempting to "entice settlers northward." In the 1930s, when the T&NO had begun advertising land sales for their northern townsites, the railway even took the innovative step of offering potential bidders a discounted rail ticket to view the townsites firsthand. All this in the name of promotion and development.

If a railway were to succeed it had to promote and develop. It had to build community and industry, and the GTP was no exception. The railway seems to have made a reasonable attempt to promote Prince George, despite the obvious limitations of World War I. These limitations were made clear as early as 1914, when two federal immigration officers visited Prince George, and the newspaper reported that, "owing to the war emigration to Canada was practically at a standstill. There was absolutely no immigration [sic] from European countries at present...the only chance to keep up the tide of emigration...was to stimulate it from United States points." This suggestion did not go unheeded, as two years later a GTP colonisation agent named Mr. Cracker explained to the *Prince George Star* that the GTP's current immigration focus was on farmers, particularly American ones. To that end, there are occasional newspaper reports of colonisation agents touring the United States and bringing the occasional immigrant into Prince George, although only two immigrant families are ever mentioned specifically, and both were from Saskatchewan.

In addition to Americans and Canadians, the only other immigrants the GTP actively encouraged during the war were Scandinavians and Mennonites. A significant amount of Scandinavian immigration did occur—both to Prince George and along the GTP east of

19 Tucker, 64.
20 Ibid., 65.
22 *Fort George Tribune*, November 7, 1914, 1.
23 *Prince George Star*, October 10, 1916, 2.
Prince George—and Scandinavians seem to have been generally well-liked and their migration went largely unnoticed, at least in the Prince George newspapers.²⁵ Mennonites, on the other hand, were disliked and widely discriminated against, largely for their German origin.

A small case study of a proposed Mennonite colony in the Prince George region shows the problems faced by the GTP colonisation agents. On November 20, 1915, the Herald announced that the Prince George Board of Trade and the GTP were working together to encourage Mennonites to form a colony in the region. However, they were not targeting German-born Mennonites, but rather the Canadian children of prairie Mennonites. The most vigorous promoter of the idea, a Mr. Kroeker, spoke quite positively of the Mennonites' farming abilities.²⁶ Planning for this seems to have continued, because six months later the railway announced they were planning a colony in the Salmon Valley, and hoped many Mennonites would choose to settle there.²⁷ It is unclear if any further planning occurred or any Mennonite settlement was established in Prince George, although Mennonites did settle in Vanderhoof in 1918. However, several years after Mr. Kroeker's initial announcement the Prince George Citizen spent months waging an all-out editorial war on Mennonites. The campaign began: "We are told that there are in our midst thousands of aliens who look upon their Canadian naturalization as a joke, and have at heart, never forgotten that they were German or Austrian by birth." The newspaper concluded, "The

²⁶ Port George Herald, November 20, 1915, 1. The "Mr. Krocker" mentioned in the article may also have been the "Mr. Cracker" mentioned later in the Prince George Star, October 10, 1916, 2.
²⁷ Prince George Citizen, May 27, 1916, 3.
railway and steamship companies were largely to blame. In this regard, railway companies and railway immigration were viewed with suspicion.

Suspicion continued to be directed at Mennonites, when the Citizen printed more critical editorials. "In our opinion Canada might as well have the Huns as the Mennonites" argues one issue. A month later, the paper went even further, writing that Mennonites "are Germans, pure and simple." This editorialists' hatred for Mennonites is corroborated by at least one report of anti-German behaviour in Prince George. An anti-German riot in 1915 ended with a German "hotel [being] destroyed and looted." Another issue reports a shooting on the GTP line because an Austrian man tried to ride for free. The newspaper openly accused "Austrians and natives of countries at war with the Empire" of causing this problem and suggesting that Austrians and others should be interned. Anti-German sentiment ran just as high in Prince George as it did in the rest of the country, followed by a predictable dislike for any German settlement. Simply put, the war was a bad time for the GTP to promote and develop Prince George. This problem was compounded with the fact the railway was slow to begin marketing the town—much slower, in fact, than its competition.

According to Neil Holmes, the railway did not begin marketing Prince George until late 1913. Before that time, two speculation companies—the Nechako Development Company and the Natural Resources Securities Company (NRS)—promoted Prince George. The Nechako Development Company appears to have disappeared from the scene quite early, so this discussion will focus on the promotion and immigration efforts of

---

28 Ibid., August 20, 1918, 3.
29 Ibid., September 22, 1918, 2.
30 Ibid., October 8, 1918, 2.
31 Fort George Tribune, May 15, 1915, 1.
32 Fort George Herald, April 16, 1915, 1, 4.
33 Holmes, 1–2.
the NRS. Speculation companies like the NRS were formed to profit from the inevitable land boom that accompanied every North American railway. In the case of Prince George, however, the NRS orchestrated a successful coup d'état by purchasing substantial land and registering it as “Fort George” before the railway. By this point, the NRS clearly realised the money-making potential of Fort George and its president, George Hammond, was determined to capitalise on this.

It was not unusual for speculation companies to publicise their land sales. What was unusual was the degree to which the NRS publicised Fort George. According to F.E. Runnalls, Central Fort George “was advertised far and wide, and lots were sold to investors and speculators all over the continent and even in Great Britain. Within a period of four years something like half a million dollars were spent in a world wide advertising and publicity campaign.” This advertising not only benefited the NRS, but also raised awareness about Fort George, benefiting both the railway and South Fort George.

The NRS had a reputation for flashy and aggressive advertising, and so it was no surprise that Hammond brought his publicity machine with him to Central Fort George. Not only did Hammond create an international publicity blitz advertising Prince George but he also bought a newspaper to extol the abundant virtues of Central Fort George.

The NRS town site was “suitable for all soft fruits except peaches,” and was made up of people who were “Presbyterian and teetotal, unlike the disorderly elements of South Fort George.” Another NRS pamphlet read:

Get in ahead of the railroads: you will make from $500 to $5000 per lot by purchasing before the first railroad reaches Fort George, because Fort George is the

---

34 F.E. Runnalls, 107.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 117.
37 Runnalls, 116.
38 Quoted in Leonard, A Thousand Blunders, 187.

69
natural supply point for an immense territory—rich in agricultural lands, timber, coal and mineral—which will be accessible immediately by the railroad connection with steamboats plying on one thousand miles of navigable waterways radiating from Fort George.\(^39\)

Intense NRS publicity like this was plastered across the continent (see Figure 5.1), all for the sake of Central Fort George.

Hammond even took over the publishing of South Fort George’s first newspaper, moving it to Central Fort George and filling it with NRS advertising.\(^40\) A typical NRS ad trumpets their newest town site—Hubert. The advertisement reads “The Big Three of Central British Columbia... New Hazelton, Hubert, Fort George” announcing that “Hubert” is not only located next to the GTP line, but also in “a large and proved agricultural district” and, if that was not enough, “an enormous field of bituminous coal.”\(^41\) Advertisements like this seemed too good to be true.

They were too good to be true, or at least they were highly exaggerated. Fort George certainly had its share of unsuspecting buyers who purchased prime slough land and scenic sandbar lots.\(^42\) However, the NRS furthered this deceit by claiming that Central Fort George was much more developed than it was.\(^43\) The townsite was not empty by any means and, in fact, Hammond funded various projects such as school buildings, a hotel, a church, a sawmill, and a sternwheeler, modestly titled the Robert C. Hammond.\(^44\) Despite these developments, Central Fort George was nowhere as developed as the publicity indicated, inevitably leading to credibility problems that harmed Hammond’s bargaining position with the railway. After out-maneuvering the GTP in the race to buy real estate and advertise it, Hammond only needed their cooperation with one issue—the station location.

\(^39\) Quoted in Runnalls, 117.
\(^40\) Ibid., 109.
\(^41\) Fort George Tribune, Oct 4, 1913, 5.
\(^43\) Holmes, 6.
Figure 5.1: Advertising for the NRS sought to prove that Central Fort George would become Canada's newest metropolis. *Fort George Tribune*, November 23, 1912.
The railway had already declared Prince George to be an important division point and Hammond needed that division point, the station, to be on NRS land. At first Hammond thought he had a deal with the railway, but this agreement went down with the Titanic. If there ever was a deal, it seems it likely it was only a handshake between Hammond and Hays, and when Hays drowned on the Titanic, the deal went down as well. Thus it happened that although the NRS owned the best land in Prince George, the railway company had money for townsite development, and the GTP could choose where to spend it. A partnership was clearly necessary, but years earlier the GTP and the NRS had committed themselves to a policy of confrontation, and neither was willing to be flexible. This was particularly true because another new decision was always pending from the Board of Railway Commissioners, and neither side wanted to compromise and then have their original position vindicated. So Central Fort George and Prince George, the NRS and the GTP, the Tribune and the Herald continued interminably in their efforts to outshine and discredit each other.

Aside from this obvious conflict between competing interests, there was a more subtle secondary conflict. It was between the people of Prince George and the railway, and it was played out in the editorial columns of the Herald. Many people living in Prince George were frustrated with the GTP for minimal marketing and poor timing for Prince George’s initial land sale.

In 1906, the Grand Trunk Pacific formed the Grand Trunk Pacific Town and Development Company and charged it with establishing and populating towns along the railroad. This company was responsible for commissioning Prince George’s City Beautiful streetscape. When the much-awaited plan was finally introduced in 1913, it was very well

---

45 Christensen, 35.
46 Stevens, 224.
received and clearly encouraged speculative interest in Prince George. At the time, the plan was unique for Western Canada and quite innovative as well, particularly through its incorporation of parks and natural geographical features. Despite this, there is little to suggest that the plan was ever publicised to any significant extent.

The GTP did not actually begin a publicity campaign until 1913, and even then the campaign was primarily defensive.\(^{47}\) Frequent advertisements appeared in the *Fort George Herald* explaining that the “official” Prince George town site was not Central Fort George, and that the GTP was not at all related to the NRS. Furthermore, the newspaper often printed editorials disassociating the GTP town site from the NRS one, although at this stage all that was known about the GTP site was that it was not the NRS site. A typical example reads, “The market has been dangerously flooded already and...unless they can invest in a town site that is being developed and increased...they had better await the sale of the GTP property.”\(^{48}\) The GTP property itself seems to have been relatively unpublicised, except to clarify that it alone was the “official” town site.

This lack of promotion was finally noticed in July, 1911, when the *Herald* mentioned this problem in an article. The writer complained that, in the face of an NRS publicity onslaught, “The GTP have never yet made any announcement of their intentions with regard to the town site situation, and so, at the time we need it most, the growth of the seedling city is nipped in the bud.”\(^{49}\) The writer went on to speculate that the railway might be operating on its own publicity timeline, and was refusing to alter it because of changing local conditions. This was compounded by problems with B.C.’s Land Act.

\(^{47}\) Holmes, 3.  
\(^{48}\) *Fort George Herald*, February 24, 1912, 3.  
\(^{49}\) Ibid., July 22, 1911, 1.
Due to these problems, much of the land around Prince George was legally pre-empted by people who had no intention of ever living on the land—they pre-empted it only in case its value increased enough for them to sell it. In 1910, the *Daily Province* provided this account of the problem: "The settlers in Fort George are beginning to raise a protest against the number of pre-emptors in their district who hold public land merely for the purpose of speculation [because] the present law protects them."\(^{50}\)

This problem appears to have been caused by two loopholes in the Land Act. First, quartz mineral claims were subject to different regulations than Land Act pre-emptions, possibly less stringent regulations. And second, the provincial government had no legal mechanism to retrieve land title from pre-emptors who had received a Certificate of Improvement. Thus, "after receiving his Certificate of Improvement...many pre-emptors have taken no further steps to complete title, [and] did not reside upon the land."\(^{51}\)

From 1910 to 1913, the Prince George newspapers consistently complained about the droves of land speculators who had no real interest in development and only served to hoard land and destabilise genuine investment.\(^{52}\) In fact, the *Herald* even declared one of its goals to be discouraging speculators from descending on Prince George by providing accurate and reliable information.\(^{53}\)

By September 1913, when the railway finally decided to sell the Prince George lots that had been laid out for months, land prices had dropped substantially. Several weeks before the sale, an editorial warned that this was the wrong time to sell, arguing that the sale was too early and ought to be postponed until the economy improved and the GTP could

\(^{50}\) *Daily Province*, April 1, 1910, 5.

\(^{51}\) *Victoria Daily Times*, March 10, 1920, 8.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., February 15, 1913, 1. Ibid., August 17, 1912, 2. Ibid., October 22, 1910.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., August 19, 1911, 1.

74
afford to invest in Prince George.\textsuperscript{54} Despite this, the railway went ahead with its land sale. As the paper predicted, it was indeed a buyer’s market at the land sales in Edmonton, Vancouver, and Prince George, which were all weak. Although the Herald’s editor tried to call the feeble sale a “magnificent success,” he also admitted, in his circumlocutory fashion, that “The market is at present the demand of speculators for lots with which to speculate, and the business section does not appear to be so much effected [sic] as the residential property.”\textsuperscript{55} In other words, the only people purchasing land were those hoping to buy low and sell high—not people with any real interest in developing Prince George or even in living there.

In many ways this was not simply the result of a poor economy. Frank Leonard observes that, rather than team up with Hammond and other big land holders, the GTP decided to go it alone, with similarly poor results.\textsuperscript{56} Railway lots also required payment with only \(\frac{1}{4}\) down, which clearly attracted speculators who would be willing to default.\textsuperscript{57} This contrasts with their contemporary, the Temiskaming & Northern Ontario Railway, which required construction of a building as a condition of sale.\textsuperscript{58} A similar requirement may have existed in Prince George but there is no evidence it was ever enforced—further encouraging speculation. It should be noted, however, that this speculation was different than the speculation that occurred because of lenient pre-emption regulations in the B.C. Land Act. Both forms of speculation nonetheless hindered development in Prince George and incited the frustration of the people of Prince George, as witnessed in the Herald. Allow this frustration was only a minor clash between competing interests it is important because it

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., September 6, 1913, 2.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., October 11, 1913, 1–2.
\textsuperscript{56} Leonard, A Thousand Blunders, 217.
\textsuperscript{57} Fort George Tribune, September 13, 1913, 1.
\textsuperscript{58} Surtees, 35.
shows that the GTP and Prince George were motivated by different goals and occasionally these goals conflicted.

The history of the promotion and development of early Prince George demonstrates the competing interests at work in the community. Central Fort George and the NRS used exaggeration and falsehood to encourage settlement—much to the chagrin of the *Herald*—which believed that this would only hurt the region's reputation in the long-run. The problem with the NRS strategy was that it still required some degree of cooperation from the railway and when this was not forthcoming the level of animosity rose considerably. The GTP's marketing strategy also started later than the NRS' and was hampered by the war effort—thereby exacerbating the situation.

A secondary source of conflict is evident in the promotion of Prince George, and it was largely due to the railway's late marketing campaign, in the face of an NRS advertising onslaught. Through the *Herald*, people in Prince George expressed their frustration with the railway. However, this disagreement was miniscule compared to the fight between the *Tribune* and the *Herald* over the unusual promotion of Prince George.
CONCLUSION

Any researcher of early Prince George history can attest to the hatred between Prince George’s founding newspapers. Although frontier newspapers are known for their frank writing, the anger between these two newspapers represents a fundamental struggle between the two competing economic interests. Central Fort George and Prince George, through their respective newspapers, struggled with one another for influence and dominance.

This struggle was for economic survival. In many cases, immigrants to the region had invested their life savings in real estate and they cared deeply about the future of their investment. Hence, these communities fought over the most fundamental of local issues.

The newspapers—the Tribune and the Herald—fought because they both represented partisan constituencies. Although Canadian partisan newspapers were on the decline in the 1909–1918 period, both local papers continued to represent their communities’ struggle until being replaced by an independent newspaper in 1916.

The first, and most divisive, battle between the newspapers and their communities was over the proposed station location. This dispute was long and bitter and demonstrated the competing economic interests of both towns. The primary conflict was, of course, between Central Fort George and Prince George, but there was also a secondary conflict between Prince George and the railway. Even though the Herald usually agreed with the GTP, it occasionally expressed the community’s frustration with the slow pace of GTP development and the refusal of the railway to compromise.

The battle that followed the station location dispute was the fight over incorporation and which communities would be included in Prince George’s application for incorporation. This fight was an unsuccessful last attempt by the Tribune to minimise the drop in property
values in Central Fort George. Central Fort George ultimately lost, but not before giving Prince George's first City Council a Central Fort George mayor. This led to a secondary conflict—again between Prince George and the GTP—where the community was frustrated with the railway for laying down so many conditions, thereby exacerbating the split in an already fractious council.

A final dispute, which lasted the duration of both newspapers' lives, was over the respective communities' promotion of the region. Here, the competing interests represented their towns differently and in ways designed to be harmful to their rivals. The primary conflict was over the NRS and the Tribune, which sought to exaggerate the benefits of the region. This ignited the ire of Prince George's Herald which argued that exaggerations would only hinder the region in the long-run. The whole dispute prompted the railway to publicly distance themselves from NRS advertising and precipitated a secondary conflict. Although this secondary conflict was minor in comparison, it centred on the frustration of the Herald with the minimal advertising and poor timing of the railway's initial land sale.

Because of all the conflict in early Prince George, it is not surprising that early Prince George was so divided. Frontier communities and railway communities both attract people willing to take risks in the hope of making money. Both are also filled with businesses eager to help people invest their money, fraudulently or otherwise. In this respect, the story of early Prince George is similar to that of many other railway communities across Canada. However, the Prince George experience does provide an interesting example of how these community disputes take on a life of their own in local newspapers, and how these newspapers encourage and support the warring parties.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Daily Province


Fort [Prince] George Herald

Fort George [Weekly] Tribune


“Grand Trunk Pacific, a trans-continental line wholly within the bounds of the Dominion of Canada.” (Government of Canada?, c. 1904, CIHM no. 75472.)


*Prince George Citizen*

Prince George City Council. *Minutes of the Regular Meetings of the City of Prince George held in the Council Chambers of City Hall*. Prince George: City Hall.

Prince George Post

Prince George Star


*Victoria Daily Times*


