

representative G.D. Eamer (3148 Caen Street) stated:

The veterans...feel that... lack of progress not only prevents them from getting essential services at the present time but jeopardizes their financial interest in their property...³⁶

At this point, VLA officials were also expressing serious concerns about the future potential of the Montgomery Place project. While approving the sale of lots to civilians, officials in Ottawa recommended that the half-acre lots be subdivided and sold in blocks to real-estate developers who, through concerted sales campaigns, could sell more lots than the VLA could by selling them on an individual basis. In addition, VLA head office suggested that the 207 unserviced lots be posted for sale because, one administrator wrote, "we cannot anticipate that we will make any use of this block."³⁷

The VLA Regional Office in Saskatoon decided on a more moderate course of action. A small number of Montgomery Place lots were offered for sale to the general public in April 1951. These lots, located on 11th Street West, were fully serviced and retained the half-acre size (with the option to subdivide).³⁸ A month later, the first lot sold to a civilian (3217 11th Street West) was made to E.W. Geall, Director of the Saskatoon Dairy Pool. This sale served to kick off a new phase of growth for Montgomery Place. Over the course of the next year, fifteen new dwellings were built, all but one (Geall's home) to veterans who had qualified for VLA loans.³⁹ These additions increased the total number of houses in the development to almost fifty.

The rush of applicants to the VLA Regional Office was soon so great that officials became concerned whether there would be enough serviced lots available. Out of an original seventy serviced lots, only eleven had not been applied for by November 1952. In the VLA's 1953 building program, thirty additional lots were serviced with sewer and water mains and released for sale to meet the heavy demand from veterans.⁴⁰

The reason for the sudden expansion of Montgomery Place, after several years of delay, is no doubt related to the booming prairie economy in the early 1950's. Saskatoon was one of the fastest growing cities in Canada during this decade--a consequence of the post-war "baby boom" and of an in-

flux of rural population into the city. Housing construction flourished throughout Saskatoon, with new subdivisions developing in the fringe areas.⁴¹ It was only natural that Montgomery Place would benefit from this economic and population boom. Another factor contributing to the expansion of the neighbourhood was the improved financial position of many veterans. The Star-Phoenix reported in the fall of 1952 that several of the veterans building on the newly developed lots of the project had purchased cheaper houses after the war, improved them, sold them and used the profits to help finance the construction of their new houses.⁴²

The VLA project continued to grow by leaps and bounds throughout the 1950's and into the 1960's. In 1959 and 1960, Montgomery Place set records for the number of new homes started in the neighbourhood in one year (58 homes in 1959 and 62 homes in 1960). By the end of 1960, a total of 305 houses had been built in the settlement.⁴³

The Montgomery Place Ratepayers' Association

In 1949, the VLA held a nationwide small holding development and improvement competition. After visiting the twenty-eight homes in Montgomery Place, the judges made several favourable comments in the local newspaper about the progress the veterans had made. They were impressed by the fact that every veteran was developing his entire half-acre property. Permanent landscaping was extensive, they observed, adding greatly to the appearance of the homes. The secret of success in Montgomery Place, the judges stated, was the strong community organization. Said one of them:

In the main we have found the best developed subdivisions are those with the best community associations.⁴⁴

The Montgomery Place Ratepayers' Association was indeed an impressive organization. This group played a prominent role in the development and improvement of the community. In the spring of 1950, for example, the association organized a combination "beautification" field day, rally and picnic lunch for the purpose of improving the grounds, walks, roads and playgrounds. With the co-operation of the Cory municipality, the Saskatoon Horticultural Society and the VLA administration, the entire community came out to work.