



Cst. Curell in front of the federal building housing Grande Prairie Detachment, 1937.

In 1901, Peace River Sub-Division headquarters was established at Lesser Slave Lake and remained there until 1908. Then in 1905, the Police District of Athabasca was created and "N" Division headquarters installed at Lesser Slave Lake. In 1908, "N" Division was transferred to Athabasca Landing, and by 1910, consisted of the Peace, Athabasca and MacKenzie Districts — some 620,000 square miles of territory that was policed by 34 members of the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

As early as 1912, various companies began gas and oil explorations throughout the area, and waves of new settlers were beginning to pour in. In response to the increased population, a detachment, consisting of one staff sergeant, one sergeant and one constable was opened at Lake Saskatoon. The detachments at Grande Prairie and Lake Saskatoon remained open until 1917.

In 1915, telegraph communication was completed between "N" Division headquarters at Athabasca, and detachments at Fort McMurray, Lac La Biche, Fort St. John, Grande Prairie, Peace River Crossing and Grouard. Reports from "N" Division that year described the crops as "generally good", and Grande Prairie was referred to as the "garden of Alberta."

There was a considerable change in the policing of the Prairie provinces during 1917 because of the First World War and the subsequent cancellation of contracts between the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to provide for the policing of these provinces by the Royal North-West Mounted Police. The agreements had been signed with Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905, and with Manitoba in 1912.

The cancellation of the agreement in Alberta took effect when the Alberta