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WARREN, EMILY M.B., PAINTINGS BY, 1920- 1933

**FILE 681**

**WARREN, EMILY M.B.,**

**PAINTINGS BY**

73

November  
Twenty-second  
1920.

Miss E.M.B. Warren,  
Ladies' College,  
First Avenue,  
Ottawa.

My dear Miss Warren:-

After more than a month's  
absence from Montreal and returned to the city and  
found awaiting me your letter of October 15th.

It has given me much pleasure to  
do as you suggest and I have written a letter to  
the Public Works Committee urging upon them the  
value of your paintings. I hope that they take  
them and that you are treated generously.

With all good wishes, I am,

Ever yours faithfully,

Principal.

November  
Twenty-second  
1920.

Hon. F. B. McCurdy,  
Minister of Public Works,  
Ottawa.

Dear McCurdy:-

I have been informed by Miss E.M.B. Warren that the question of purchasing, or otherwise, the paintings which she has made will shortly be decided by the Public Works Committee.

I would like to say that Miss Warren went to a very great deal of trouble in order to paint from life the figures appearing in the pictures, and also the flags. I know that she has gone from place to place in Canada and has painted the flags from the originals, so that the pictures ought to possess much value owing to the faithful portrayal which has been made. In the two pictures appear the senior officers of all the divisions and of all the corps formations. They ought, indeed, to be worth purchasing.

I hope they may find a place in the Memorial Gallery at Ottawa. Until the time when the building for War Memorials and Trophies is erected they might find a place on the walls of the House of Parliament.

With all good wishes, I am,

Ever yours faithfully,

Principal.



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS  
OF CANADA,  
OTTAWA.

GL

27th November, 1920.

General Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G.,  
Principal, McGill University,  
Montreal, P. Q.

Dear Sir Arthur,-

I have your letter of 22d instant.

For some time past Miss Warren has had a proposal before the Government to purchase, at \$10,000.00, certain paintings which she had executed. The matter was referred to the Advisory Arts Council, and their recommendation was not in favor of acceptance, of which decision Miss Warren was notified by the Arts Council, some weeks ago.

Yours sincerely,

*H. W. D. Curdy*

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# The Citizen

Founded 1844  
THE CITIZEN PUBLISHING CO., Limited  
PUBLISHERS

An Independent Clean Home Newspaper  
MORNING - EVENING

W. M. SOUTHAM, Managing Director  
H. S. SOUTHAM, Secretary-Treasurer

OTTAWA, Dec. 1st, 1920.  
Canada

General Sir Arthur W. Currie, G.C.B., K.C., M.G.,  
McGill University.,  
Montreal.  
Que.

Sir:-

The enclosed marked editorial has reference to Miss Warren's pictures of the regimental and King's colors of battalions which went overseas as units. The Citizen is keenly interested in helping to have these pictures retained in Ottawa, preferably in the national buildings, Parliament Hill. We feel that an expression of opinion from you regarding the pictures would be most valuable. I would, therefore, greatly appreciate any communication you could give us for publication. It would afford me the opportunity to make farther editorial reference.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CAB/G

Charles A. Bowman

73  
2nd December, 1920.

PERSONAL.

Charles A. Bowman, Esq.,  
"The Citizen",  
Ottawa,  
Canada.

Dear Sir,-

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 1st instant to which was attached a clipping from "The Citizen".

I may say that I know Miss Warren's pictures very well indeed, though my ignorance of painting does not justify me in expressing any opinion as to their artistic value. What I do know is that she was most energetic and conscientious in having a faithful portrayal of the subject. The men, and there are in the picture a great many, as you know, were painted from life. The colours were painted from the actual colours of the regiment, and the surroundings are a faithful reproduction of the scene in the Abbey, because that is where she painted the picture. I do not believe that there is amongst all the Canadian War pictures one which is more exact in detail, and I do know that many of the pictures which Canada has paid for have been painted in their studios by artists who, in the painting, give no evidence of ever having seen the place or the situation or the circumstance which they seek to depict. Many of the pictures which Canada has bought, and I presume paid for, are what the ordinary uneducated person like myself regard as freak pictures. I have seen an exhibition of these pictures and also I spent all the months in France that Canadian troops were there. I never saw anything which by the wildest stretch of imagination appear to be what some of these artists have painted. I frankly admit that possibly it is my ignorance of Art that leads me to make such a statement, but I submit that these pictures are intended to be of interest to other ignorant people like myself. They are not merely for the so-called artists to view and enjoy. I know that Miss Warren's pictures are true and faithful portrayals; not only has she spent a great deal of time in painting them but she has spent a great deal of money and gone to a great deal of trouble to get them true to life. I know the Canadian Government are under no obligation to buy her pictures, yet it will cause surprise to many people, and possibly some wonder as well as to why the Government refused to consider Miss Warren's painting when they have been saddled by some of the freaks I have referred to above. Possibly there are some who may say that perhaps it was because Miss Warren, being only a woman, did not know the

(2)

value of establishing proper business relations with those on whose say-so the Government acted. I do not know whether the Government have offered Miss Warren anything for her pictures. I have been told by her that she was simply told they weren't interested. The pictures may not be worth what she values them at, but they ought to be worth something, and I think she should be made an offer. I know that she painted them entirely on her own responsibility. They are of no interest to any one except to Canada or to a Canadian.

I wish to say, Mr. Bowman, that this is a personal letter to you, and is not intended for publication. I do not wish to be involved in any public controversy with the Government as to whether they should purchase the picture or not, that is entirely their own affair; but, should they not do so, I, for one, would not be able to make up my mind why they rejected hers and accepted some of the freakish things they have bought. The workings of the War Memorial Board and the War Records Organizations would make a very interesting study, and, no doubt, would be highly interesting.

Ever yours faithfully,

Principal.

AWC/W.

2nd December, 1920.

Hon. F. B. McCurdy,  
Minister of Public Works,  
Ottawa,  
Canada.

Dear Mr. McCurdy,-

I have your letter of the 27th November with reference to Miss Warren's paintings. I note that the Advisory Arts Council decline to recommend their purchase.

I quite realize that this is a matter which is entirely the business of the Canadian Government. I will also say that I do not know whether Miss Warren's paintings are worth \$10,000. or \$10. I am a very ignorant person when it comes to oil paintings, but I probably know as much about them as the great majority of people who will see the War Memorial paintings bought and paid for, I presume, by the Canadian Government. It will be hard for we common people to understand why the Government refused to offer Miss Warren anything for her paintings when they have been saddled with some of the outlandishly freakish things which I have seen exhibited as War Memorial paintings, the property of the Canadian Government. I know this, that Miss Warren spent months and months in getting her paintings faithfully exact, the figures in it were painted from life, the flags in it are an exact reproduction of the "colours" of the regiment, while the background is also faithfully portrayed, as the pictures were painted in the Abbey itself. I have looked at other pictures which you have purchased and which are supposed to represent scenes in France. I suppose I spent as long in France as any other Canadian during the War, yet I cannot, by the wildest stretch of imagination, believe that I ever saw such scenes as some of these pictures present. It appears to me that some of them were painted by artists who, in their studios, gave free rein to their imagination. If the Arts Advisory Committee have recommended the purchase of these other paintings solely on account of their merit, it will be hard for some of us to understand why they have not considered Miss Warren's picture worthy of an offer. I know that Sir Robert Borden's opinion was that Miss Warren's pictures were worthy of <sup>every</sup> consideration, and I, for one, frankly believe that they never received very much consideration.

Yours faithfully,

AAC/W.

Principal.

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W. M. SOUTHAM, Managing Director  
H. S. SOUTHAM, Secretary-Treasurer

OTTAWA,  
Canada , Dec. 6th. 1920.

General Sir Arthur W Currie. G.C.B., K.C.M.G.,  
McGill University,  
Montreal. Que.

Dear Sir:-

Thank you very much for your helpful letter with regard to Miss Warren's pictures. I note what you say that it is a personal letter not intended for publication. I shall respect your desire to keep out of any public controversy with regard to the pictures.

With every good wish,

Yours very truly,

CAB/G

*Charles A. Bowman*

P.S. Any future editorial referring to the pictures will be forwarded in a marked copy to you.



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS  
OF CANADA,  
OTTAWA.

Personal.

December 6th, 1920.

Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G.,  
Principal,  
McGill University,  
Montreal,  
P.Q.

Dear Sir Arthur,-

With reference to your letter of 2nd instant, I desire to also range myself in the ranks of those who feel themselves unfitted to pass an opinion of value on works of art. Doubtless because my predecessors in office were similarly circumstanced, the Advisory Arts Council was called into being to advise in selection when the Government was acquiring works of art. I should be quite unready to act excepting on their advice.

I should say that the Advisory Arts Council has not recommended the purchase of any of the War Memorials referred to in your letter, and have personally expressed themselves very much along the line you have with regard to the merits of some of the pictures. I understand the collection was made by the Canadian War Records overseas, and while quite likely, on account of the passing out of the body that collected them, the Canadian Government may find themselves in possession, it will be without cost to the treasury.

I am sure you will agree with me that a person in a position of responsibility would

not be on safe ground were he to proceed to act  
in matters that he knows he is unversed in,  
except on the advice of recognized experts.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

*Wm. L.edy*

---

73  
Warren

January  
Twenty-eighth  
1921.

G. W. Andrews, Esq.,  
95 Academy Road,  
Winnipeg, Man.

My dear Mr. Andrews:-

I have your letter of the 24th instant and can best reply to it by enclosing a copy of a letter I wrote to Mr. Bowman with whom I had some correspondence on the matter.

I do not know what Miss Warren's understanding was with the Canadian authorities at the time she began to paint her pictures. I know nothing about hostile influence in London, referred to by Mr. Bowman.

Most cordially reciprocating  
your good wishes, I am,

Ever yours faithfully,



# THE GREAT WAR VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

OF CANADA INCORPORATED

OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

DOMINION COMMAND

CITIZEN BUILDING  
OTTAWA  
CANADA

P.O. BOX 384  
PHONE Q 3263

May 6th, 1921.

Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,  
Principal,  
McGill University,  
Montreal, P.Q.

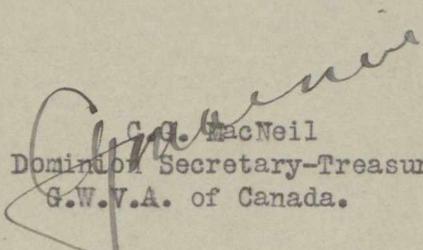
Sir:

Re "Canada's Tribute".

Because of the interest, which you have previously shown in Miss E.M.B. Warren's offer of the above paintings to the Government, I am taking the liberty of forwarding, for your attention, copy of a memorandum submitted to the Honourable the Minister of Public Works, in this regard.

I trust that you may find it possible to lend your support to the suggestion advanced.

I am, Sir,  
Yours faithfully,

  
C. G. MacNeil  
Dominion Secretary-Treasurer,  
G.W.V.A. of Canada.

MacN/H  
Enc. 1

May 2nd, 1921.

The Honourable F.B. McCurdy,  
Minister,  
Department of Public Works,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Sir:-

Re-"Canada's Tribute" by Miss E.M.B. Warren.

In accordance with our recent conversation regarding the decision of the National Art Committee against the purchase of paintings of the Canadian Colors in Westminster Abbey ("Canada's Tribute) by Miss E.M.B. Warren, I respectfully beg to submit the following memorandum for your consideration. Without calling into question the good faith of the Art Committee, or the competence of its Chairman, Sir Edmund Byron Walker whose devotion to art in the public interest is gratefully acknowledged- our petition is that further consideration be given to the desirability of securing the pictures for Canada, in view of the friendly interest taken by many Canadian soldiers in Miss Warren's work, and the widespread public interest among Canadian men and women in the subject.

During the months that Miss Warren worked on the pictures in the Abbey, before the armistice, Canadian soldiers on leave came frequently to see the paintings of their colors. Invariably, they expressed the keenest interest and pleasure, and, in many instances, gratitude, to the woman artist who had conceived this inspiring idea. The visitors to the Abbey were of all ranks, in the large majority, non-commissioned men.

The action of the Ottawa branch of the Great War Veterans' Association, last autumn, in asking for the honor of housing the pictures in the Veterans' Club, until they could be more permanently placed, reflected the attitude of Canadian ex-service men generally.

Coupled with the interest of ex-service men and the general public is the warm support and approval of the pictures by Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minister of Canada at the time they were painted-they were indeed finished in Ottawa, where the artist worked in the Prime Minister's Office for a final sitting of Sir Robert Borden- also, Sir Arthur Currie, Commander-in-chief of the Canadian Army Overseas, equally endorsed the paintings.

The pictures appeal to the ordinary man as symbolic of the great part played by the Canadian Army in the War. As symbols, truly executed, they may reasonably be expected to increase in historic value. Every detail of the colors, uniforms, and the Abbey architecture, would seem to be accurately and beautifully done. Miss Warren's reputation as a painter of interiors stands high among artists.

With regard to the value of the pictures, as works of fine arts, the following are unsolicited opinions of men of eminence in the art world. They are excerpts from private letters to Miss Warren, the originals of which are available at any time:

"OPINIONS OF MISS E.M.B. WARREN'S PAINTINGS OF  
CANADIAN COLORS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Sir David Murray, R.A., President, Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colors, London, says (after seeing colored proofs):

"The warm tinted one gives me the impression of a VERY FINE PICTURE FINELY CONCEIVED AND WELL CARRIED OUT.

IT STRIKES ME AS A SERIOUS AND WELL AND ARTISTICALLY CARRIED OUT RECORD OF THE DISASTEROUS WAR, far more satisfactorily than the great number of colossal canvasses which have been publicly exhibited and in most cases unworthy of the great opportunity given to artists.

I hope it will be favourably considered by some public gallery committee in Canada and there find a home where it will do you credit".

---

Burleigh Bruhi, President, British Water color Society, London, says:

"I consider your work as regards interiors and lighting effects, as good as, if not superior to, that of many who are more widely known.

I hope they (the two war pictures) will meet with the success they deserve."

---

H. Davis Richter, R.S.O.I. Decorative Artist, South Kensington, says:

"It is such a finely conceived subject and treated with the dramatic force necessary for such a subject.

Doubtless the Canadian Government will secure this record, or it would make a splendid centre for the next exhibition of the Royal Society of British Artists."

---

Arthur Severn, Brantwood, Coniston, says:

"I thought it was very good and true when I saw it in the Abbey, and hope it will be bought and remain in Canada."  
-----

Mr. Arthur Severn has perhaps the finest private collection of Turner paintings of any individual, and there is no more highly respected art critic in the British Empire.

With such unbiased and authoritative opinions of the art value of Miss Warren's work, one is assured that the paintings have real merit in composition and execution.

Letters from members of the Royal Family could be quoted in commendation. Miss Warren's pictures of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and others, have been bought by Queen Mary and Queen Alexandra. Miss Warren studied under John Ruskin, and illustrated Ruskin's Life by Sir E.T. Cook. As for Miss Warren's status as an artist, she is an exhibitor at the Royal Academy, and a member of the British Water Color Society, and Associate of the Royal Institute of British Artists, member of the Royal Water Color Society, member of Old Dudley, and of the principal Women's Art Associations.

Hence the Government is not asked to purchase pictures by an unknown painter, but by an artist of mature standing and ability in the highest British Art Circles.

It should be added that Miss Warren has not asked anyone to take up the question of the purchase of her pictures, nor urged any re-consideration of the Art Committee's decision. She came to Canada to finish the pictures, when the colors returned after the armistice, on the advice of Canadian Military Authorities. She remained in Canada after the pictures were finished last March, pending a decision by the Government as to their purchase. It seemed only necessary to have these facts brought to the attention of the Government, to ensure that Sir Robert Borden's expressed wishes and recommendation would be carried out, but Miss Warren's part has been merely to furnish information on request from members of the public who were impressed with the nobility and national value of her pictures, including leading representatives of the organized ex-service men of Canada.

May I suggest, therefore, that the matter be further reviewed by the members of the National Art Committee.

I am, Sir,  
Yours faithfully.

GGM/BC

C.G. MacNeil,  
Dominion Secretary-Treasurer,  
G.W.V.A. of Canada.  
Canada.

May  
Ninth  
1921.

C. G. MacNeil, Esq.,  
Dominion Secretary-Treasurer,  
G.W.V.A. of Canada,  
Citizen Building,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Mr. MacNeil:-

I beg to acknowledge receipt of  
your letter of the 6th of May and will be only  
too pleased to support your letter to the Hon. Mr.  
McCurdy re Miss Warren's pictures.

Yours faithfully,

25 Westgate Terrace

Earls Court

June 20<sup>th</sup>

Dear Sir Arthur Currie

Please forgive my troubling you, but you have always been very kind and interested in my two pictures of "Canada's Tribute".

It has occurred to me that they might possibly be of interest to McGill College, especially as you are the central figure.

If so, would it be possible to arrange the purchase by subscriptions from the students for a period of years if not possible by a lump sum.

These things are often done over here & I would be pleased to meet people in the matter of price.

These pictures have cost me more than anyone can realise in any way, and I would be glad to feel that all I have gone through will be of some use

and that some of the Canadians  
may care for them.

I am coming over to Canada in September  
but please do not mention this, you will  
understand I know, its hateful to say so  
but alas! I have enemies who do not  
in the least understand my motives.  
If I could afford it I would be pleased  
to present the pictures, but alas!  
I cannot do so, they cost me so much  
that I must pay back.

yours sincerely

Emily M. Swanen

Do you think that Hardhouse? Club  
at Toronto might be interested if the bill  
is not.

July 4th, 1923.

Miss Emily M. Warren,  
25 Westgate Terrace,  
Earl's Court, London.

My dear Miss Warren:-

I am very glad to acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 20th and to thank you for the opportunity you have given McGill University to purchase your two pictures 'Canada's Tribute'.

I am very sorry that this University, like many other institutions to-day, is very hard up and there are no funds at my disposal at present for such a purpose. I would be interested in knowing, though, just what price you would have set upon the painting. I have always been very sorry they were not purchased for the gallery at Ottawa.

I hope I may have the pleasure of seeing you when you visit Canada next autumn.

With all good wishes, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Private & Confidential

Brixton Central School  
Durand Gardens  
S.W.9

July 18<sup>th</sup>

General Curry

Dear Sir

Pardon the liberty I take in writing to you; but I feel so keenly about my sisters pictures of "Canada's Tribute" that I am venturing to write to you.

My sister has shown me your letter in one of the Canadian papers, so that I feel I have a sympathiser.

The object of my writing is to suggest that the pictures

should be bought by private  
subscription and why not such  
a body as the "War Veterans"  
Each ~~soldier~~ would surely  
be willing to pay a small  
sum towards the subscription.  
Or could not a public subscription  
be got up, and present the  
pictures to the War Veterans,  
who so worthy?

Surely no 'foreign' art critic  
could prevent this?

Having heard my sister's story  
it appals me that such unworthy  
things can be.

My sister is utterly ignorant of  
this letter of mine, so please  
do not mention it to anyone

but if the matter appears  
feasible, please let it come from  
you.

I have given my school address  
where I am Art Mistress as of  
course my home address is  
identical with my sisters

with apologies

yours very sincerely

Louisa A. Warren

The Ladies College  
Hurst Avenue  
Ottawa  
Nov = 3<sup>rd</sup>

Dear Sir Arthur Currie

Please forgive me  
for having been so long in answering  
your kind letter.

I shall be in Montreal next  
~~Saturday~~ Friday Nov = 9<sup>th</sup>  
on my way through to Boston.  
Might I come and see you any  
time between 2-30 pm + 6 pm!

With kind regards

Yours sincerely  
Emily M. Warren

November 6th, 1923.

Miss Emily M. B. Warren,  
The Ladies College,  
First Avenue,  
Ottawa, Ont.

My dear Miss Warren:-

I am this morning in receipt  
of your note of November 3rd.

I really do not see how I can  
give you an appointment on Friday between 2.30 and  
6 p.m., as I have a luncheon engagement that day  
which may well last until about three o'clock. At  
that hour I have a meeting in my office and at five  
o'clock I am unveiling a memorial tablet in the  
Science Building. It might be that the latter  
function would be over about ten minutes to six, when  
I could give you a few minutes.

I am sorry you are passing through  
on a day so completely taken up.

Yours faithfully,

The Ladies College  
1<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Ottawa  
March 25<sup>th</sup>

Dear General Currie.

My big pictures  
have to find a temporary  
home before I return to  
England in May.

General Loomis suggested  
that perhaps General  
Macdonell at Kingston  
might allow them to go for  
a while to the college.

What do you think of this?  
I've written to General  
Macdonell & would be so  
glad if you could be so  
kind as to write him a  
little note also.

Please forgive my troubling  
you.  
Yours sincerely  
I. M. G. Dawson

Personal

March 26th, 1924.

Miss E.M.B. Warren,  
The Ladies College,  
1st Avenue,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Miss Warren:-

I beg to acknowledge receipt  
of your letter of March 25th.

You say that you have written  
General Macdonell asking him to provide space  
for your pictures at the Royal Military College.  
I should think that the General would be very  
glad to do this. I am writing him a little note  
as you suggest.

I am very sorry that you are  
having all the hard luck in disposing of your  
pictures.

With all good wishes, I am,

Yours faithfully,

CANADIAN PACIFIC



11. April.

Dear Sir Arthur Currie

Thank you so  
much for having written to  
General Macdonell.

He has very kindly asked for  
the two pictures to go there.

I had a cable on April 9<sup>th</sup> asking  
me to go as my mother is very ill.  
I am leaving on this boat at  
2:0'clock.

Thank you so much for all  
the kind interest you have  
taken

I hope to be back in Canada  
again either in the fall  
or else just after Xmas.

Had hoped to have gone to  
see you before leaving but  
it was such a rush it was  
impossible.

With kind regards  
& thanks

Yours sincerely

S. M. B. Warner

January 27, 1933.

Mrs. Woolley,  
Montreal. P. Q.

Dear Mrs. Woolley,

With reference to your telephone conversation with me today on the subject of the two pictures by Miss Warren which hang in Moyse Hall, the Principal says that he does not believe Miss Warren has any legal claim on the Government of Canada, because, as he understood it, she painted them, and then thought she was going to sell them to the Government; she had no assurance from the Borden Government that they would take the pictures at the time she made them. She brought them over to Canada, exhibited them to the Directors of the Art Gallery, and at no time did she ever receive any encouragement from them. The Principal adds that he may be going too far in saying that she had no encouragement from the Government during the War; if they did encourage her to paint them it was not his province to know it. He is sorry, but to the best of his recollection this is all he can say about the matter.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary to the Principal



MCGILL UNIVERSITY

March 22, 1933.

Memo for the files:

Miss Treleaven, Mr. Beatty's secretary, telephoned me this morning, asking about the Warren pictures that hang in Moyses Hall. Mr. Beatty had had a letter from Dr. Martin with reference to an enquiry from Dr. Finnie, on behalf of Miss Warren, asking if McGill would not buy the pictures. Miss Warren had spent thousands on them and yet was willing to let them go for about \$2,000. Mr. Beatty told Miss Treleaven that there was no chance of McGill buying them.

Sir Arthur had considerable correspondence with Miss Warren about these pictures, and also with other people on her behalf. I told Miss Treleaven the situation. She asked me to telephone Dr. Finnie and tell him that McGill could not afford to buy them. I did this, explaining to him the situation as revealed by correspondence on file. He was quite satisfied. The replicas of the pictures which had been forwarded to Mr. Beatty are being returned to Dr. Finnie at his request. There is a possibility that Miss Warren may take the pictures away now that she is sure we will not buy them. ) D. McMurray. ) D. McM.