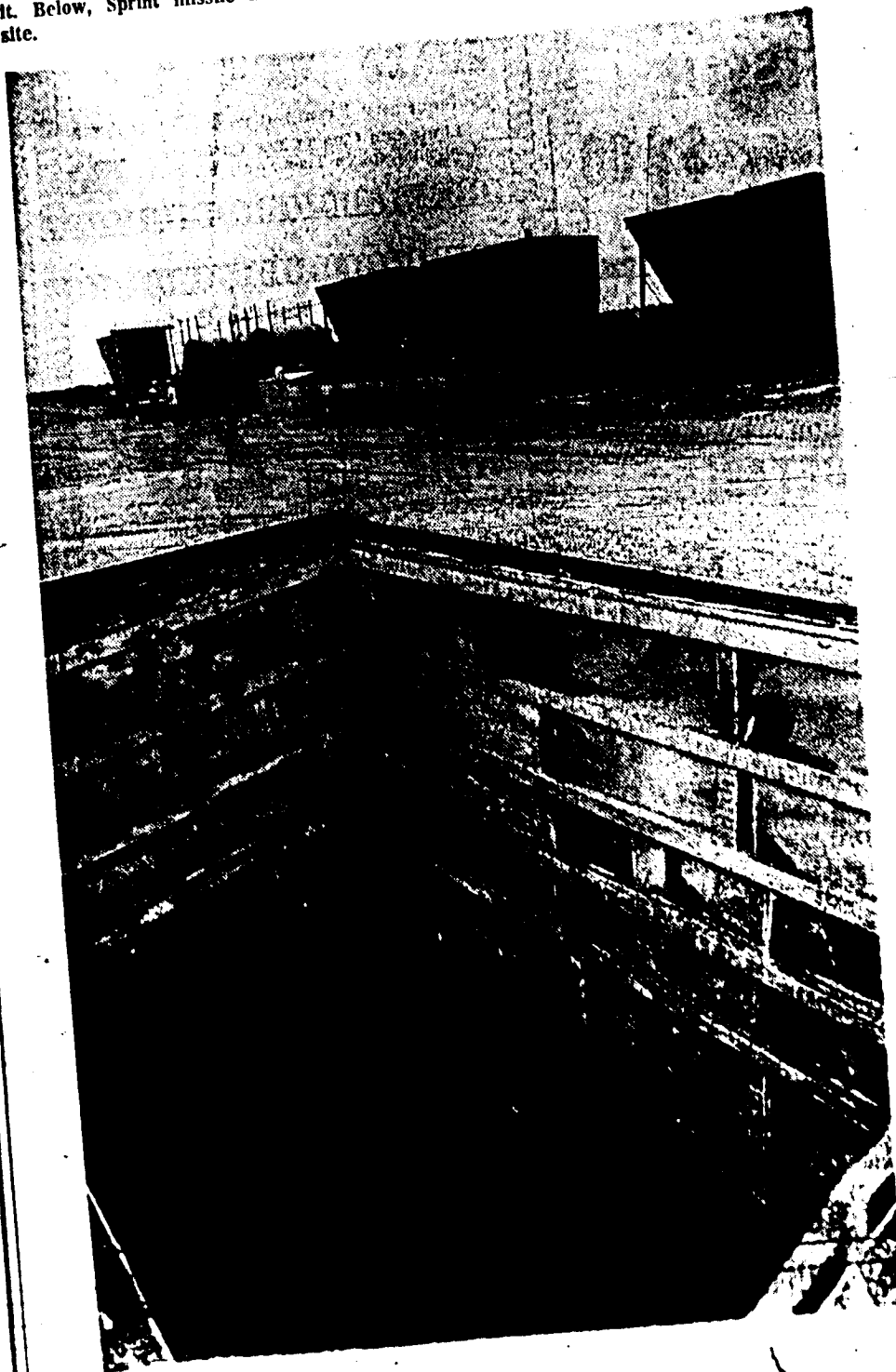


ABM In N.D.:



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Housing is scarce. Langdon is already short of water. A federal grant will be necessary to extend sewer service to new residents. The hospitals need at least one — better two — new doctors. The school system will need a 100 per cent tuition subsidy from the government in order to operate effectively.

Conditions in other communities — Walthalla, Cavalier, Edmore — appear much the same. But business is booming and officials and most citizens appear optimistic.

There is a contrary opinion now and then: Mrs. Art Hahn, a farm wife who lives in Langdon with her retired husband said simply, "I don't think Langdon will solve all these problems. We just don't have the facilities."

But Langdon is trying. Led by Mayor Harold Blanchard a chiropractor, the community has applied for federal money to build new sewer and water systems.

The 1970 census showed population of 2,142 in Langdon, and the water supply would have been adequate for two more years — if the population remained stable.

As soon as the water department began to connect trailer homes and new residents to the water supply, however, residents began to complain of falling water pressure.

"Sometimes, the water just quits running," said a high school girl who lives across the road from Morrison-Knudsen's 250-trailer park. So, Langdon has applied for federal money.

The city has 10 per cent water rights on a reservoir being built on the South Pembina River at Mount Carmel, and the federal money would pay for pumping the water into Langdon, 15 miles away.

Langdon, ND - Mrs. Laura MacFarlane is 92. She has lived in this northeastern North Dakota community for 79 years and she's seen a lot happen - but never anything like what's happening this summer.

The United States government is building an anti-ballistic missile system in the area, spending an estimated \$160 million on it. That doesn't include the cost of the nuclear warheads - each in the megaton range - which will equip each of the missiles.

Langdon is feeling the full impact of the development, and trying to adjust to a new situation that finds an unprecedented influx of people who have unprecedented amounts of money to spend.

Mrs. MacFarlane thinks the community will make the adjustment. "Have to," she said.

Nevertheless, the problems facing Langdon and northeastern North Dakota appear staggering.

Already, nearly 1400 new workers, some with families, have moved into the area. More are coming every day.

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Mayor Blanchard says the money is virtually assured, and expects to see work on the project begin this fall.

The mayor is also optimistic about the sewer grant, which would expand facilities to accommodate 2,000 more people.

Walhalla and Cavalier - after Langdon the towns expected to absorb most of the ABM impact personnel - both have sewer and water systems adequate for populations well above present levels.

But all three of the towns face housing shortages, and housing is the one area where no federal help can be expected.

The Army Corps of Engineers, in an Impact Report issued before construction on the ABM system began, noted succinctly, "It is concluded that private entrepreneurs will recognize the demand for housing for approximately 4,500 persons and will construct trailer or other types of temporary facilities...Further, it is believed that entrepreneurs also will recognize the continuing requirement and provide permanent-type housing for approximately 2,200 persons in those communities nearest the sites."

At the moment, however, housing is practically unavailable, and what exists is expensive.

"Any empty house in the area is filled by now," an Edmore businessman said.

House rents in Edmore, which is 16 miles southwest of the ABM site near Nekoma, run to \$150 unfurnished.

In Langdon, houses are not available, but some residents have provided sleeping rooms in their basements, or rented spare rooms. Rents vary, but \$10 to \$20 a week appear standard. Some charge \$3 a night.

Some farmers, attempting to supplement their agricultural income, have renovated vacant houses on their rural property, and rented them to ABM workers. Such houses rent for \$100 to \$150 a month, according to Mrs. Thelma Smerud, who is employed by the city of Cavalier to assist new residents in finding housing.

Cavalier is 47 miles northeast of the major ABM site near Nekoma but only 19 miles northeast of the Perimeter Acquisition Radar site near Concrete.

Many ABM workers chose mobile homes for housing, however, and some are living in camper trailers or pickup trucks with campers. One employee at Nekoma is living in a Volkswagen bug.

Thirty-eight campers and trailers are parked in Nekoma - which is only a mile and a half from the ABM site. Nekoma has no city sewer or water supply.

The mobile home is a standard solution to the housing shortage, and trailers can be found parked throughout the area - in city parks and on farms.

New trailer parks are under construction throughout the area, and existing ones are full.

Morrison-Knudsen Company, the prime contractor, has built a trailer park for its key personnel in northwest Langdon. The park will accommodate 200 to 250 mobile homes.

The city of Langdon has annexed the property and hopes to provide sewer and water service.

Langdon already has a great many new homes - but those are occupied by permanent residents.

Francis Mois, a home builder at Lampert Lumber Company in Langdon said he normally builds three or four new houses each year - and was planning only one extra this year.

But in Cavalier, Mayor Robert Olson, who operates Page Oil Company, said a "heleuva lot of building" is going on.

Two apartment buildings have been completed - and filled - this year, and a third is under construction. All of the units are already leased. Construction on a fourth building starts Monday.

All together, the four buildings will accommodate 23 families.

In Walhalla, however, Mayor Leon Dubourt, a banker, said housing just did not exist. Consequently, he said, Walhalla does not expect a large influx of people.

"If," he conceded, "private enterprise takes the initiative, which is what the Corps of Engineers expects, there may be a permanent population increase of 450."

That lack of housing may protect Walhalla from the major problem each of these communities must face: educating the young.

Walhalla's School Superintendent, Pete Gefroh doesn't expect an influx of students. "Do they have any place to live?" he asked.

So, he has prepared his budget, making provision for a minimum of new students - perhaps two dozen, he said.

Gefroh doesn't expect workmen at the sites to bring families with them - and those that did won't stay for the school year, he said, because the school system can't accommodate them.

At Cavalier, Superintendent John Sunderland said, "We probably will experience very little impact this year, and we can adequately handle it."

"We've budgeted enough to take care of any necessary increase in faculty. We haven't got the funds," he conceded, "but they're budgeted."

The Cavalier district hopes to get federal impact funds but isn't necessarily counting on them. "We'll have to provide education with or without the money," he said, "but we're making every effort to get all the money we possibly can."

Sunderland is optimistic. His district has had such problems before - with the Minuteman construction in the area, and with reorganization. "We've always been able to handle it," he said. "We'll tackle the problems as they arise."

Both Cavalier and Walhalla expect some impact when construction on the PAR site at Concrete gets fully under way - perhaps next fall. But at Langdon, the problem is immediate.

Langdon's Superintendent James Wiese joked, "We're going to get a few more students this fall - perhaps 400 overall."

But he doesn't know how many exactly, and he doesn't know what grades will be most affected.

The Corps of Engineers is circulating a survey among employees at the Nekoma site in an attempt to discover what impact the schools can expect. That survey should be done this week. About August 1, when the Morrison-Knudsen trailer park is filled, Wiese will run a pre-school registration.

Then, he will try to hire teachers, probably as many as 12 or 13.

Langdon is building a new high school and the classroom portion should be done this fall. But the high school was built for the community and planned before consideration of the ABM personnel, so the old building may have to be used for classes.

But the Langdon school district's major problem is money.

The Board has asked for a 100 percent tuition subsidy from federal impact funds, and, according to Wiese, "We'll have to have it in order to operate."

Business in northeastern North Dakota is booming with new money, of course. Taverns, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, especially, are prospering.

In Langdon, the manager of the Green Mill Cafe said, "We've got too much business, in fact - more than we can handle."

But prices do not seem to have been adversely affected. Groceries in Langdon cost about what they do in Grand Forks or Fargo - largely because chain stores prices are determined at chain headquarters rather than by local managers.

Restaurant prices have risen a little, local residents said, but a turkey dinner with trimmings cost only \$1.50 in Langdon. A bottle of beer brings 40 cents - less than in many of Fargo's bars.

But the influx of people has caused some bitterness among local residents.

"For business it's a damn headache," the manager of the Farmers Union station in Edmore (who asked not to be identified because it might hurt business) said.

He complained of losing a "real good man" to the missile crews because he could not compete with Morrison-Knudsen's wage scale, which begins at \$4.30 an hour, according to J.G. Rutherford, the project business manager.

Al Heck at Heck's Quality Construction in Langdon said he had raised his employee's wages but could not compete with the M-K scale. But, he said, labor was not short because he employed younger persons who could not get jobs at the missile site.

Francis Mois at the Lampert Lumber Company, said he had no trouble getting, or keeping, employees.

Beth Roder, the personnel director at the Langdon hospital said some local women complained "Outsiders are coming in to take the jobs."

Although Morrison-Knudsen makes every effort to employ local workers, Rutherford said outsiders were hired, "because we can't find skilled electricians in North Dakota."

The secretaries at Morrison-Knudsen are almost all North Dakotans, he said.

In some cases, unionization apparently has prevented local workers from getting jobs at the missile sites.

Most cars parked in the lot at the Nekoma site had North Dakota or Minnesota plates, with a scattering from all over the rest of the country.

Farmers also have complained that seasonal help is not available, according to Edward Boe, a North Dakota Extension Service Agent assigned to the Corps of Engineers for Community Liaison.

That is no one's fault but the farmer's, said Boe. Farmers haven't been paying an adequate wage, he insisted. "Those who are paying what they should aren't having any trouble finding help."

Other than a shortage of labor, the farmer seems largely unaffected by the missile construction - unless he rents his vacant house to workers or establishes a trailer park on his land. Or unless the Corps of Engineers plans a missile site on his property.

That is the case with Art Gerth, who farms northwest of Langdon, near Dresden. The Corps plans to take nine acres from Gerth.

"I don't want to give it up," he said. It's not that Gerth is against the missile - he thinks it's necessary for protection of the community.

But Gerth said, "Why should I give up my land when the fellow across the road gets the same protection and doesn't give up a thing?"

Mrs. Hahn is even more bitter, and she and her husband plan to refuse to sell their land to the Corps, largely because the Corps "didn't give us a fair deal" on land taken from them for the Minuteman system.

That means it will be condemned.

Mrs. Hahn objects to the missile deployment in the first place. "I don't think any missile is a solution to any problem," she said.

Mrs. Hahn's opposition to the missile appears a decided minority in Langdon. Most residents consider the missile protection for themselves. "I'm 100 percent for it," Erv Hellem, a barber said.

A store clerk in Edmore objected to "the position these missiles put North Dakota in. When they go, we go."

And a clerk in a department store in Langdon said, "I don't like all the publicity this brings to the community."

Mrs. MacFarlane noted simply, "It's going to be. There is nothing I can do."

That Langdon's population will increase is also beyond the community's control. By 1974, Langdon will have a population approaching 4,000 - nearly double what it is now.

These people will be well educated, highly skilled, highly paid civilians.

A permanent military base will be located at the PAR site near Concrete and at the Nekoma site.

How will the community react to this influx of people?

"If they treat us right, we'll treat them right," Mrs. MacFarlane said.

And what will this influx mean to the character of the community? What will it do to the people?

Mrs. MacFarlane reflected on that.

"It's going to be different here," she conceded. "But we'll adjust to it."