The paradox of today's problems concerning the existence and potential growth of urban centers in the Rocky Mountains National Parks of Canada is expressed in the hopes of the early administrators that such townsites would flourish and thereby "benefit" the Parks which they occupied. This optimism which persisted over many decades, has precipitated complex land management problems relative to the introduction of a formal National Parks Policy in the 1960's.

This paper seeks to describe the establishment and development of Banff townsite in Banff National Park and briefly its relationship with the National Park idea. Questions are posed concerning the future management of Banff, now a community of about 3,400 residents, and other Park centers.

Banff has experienced three distinct periods of development, the Spa, the Resort, and the Service Center periods which fall within the following time periods respectively: (1885-1910); (1911-1945); (1946-1968).

THE SPA AT BANFF

Banff was surveyed and settled when the prospects of resource exploitation motivated substantial European penetration of the upper Bow River valley in the 1880's. Resource extraction in the form of furs, wild meat and minerals had been intermittently pursued for some decades but a more immediate and sustained exploitation was possible with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) in 1883.

A number of small frontier communities facilitated the extraction of coal, copper and timber. Silver City flourished briefly at the foot of Mount Eisenhower (1883-1885); Siding 29 functioned as a C.P.R. depot and service center near the present site of Banff (1883-1897); and coal communities were established at Anthracite (1886-1904), Bankhead (1904-1923) and Canmore (1889- ). Only Canmore survives today but because of its rail line in the area, the C.P.R. maintained a direct interest in future activities in the area about Banff.

The early extractive activities were still engaged upon at the time the first public reserve was set aside in 1885, and were to continue for some years thereafter as the youthful Dominion Parks policy was being initiated and developed. These activities did much to change the landscape about Banff and elsewhere in the present National Park.

THE HOT SPRINGS

The existence of hot springs on Sulphur Mountain had more positive implications for settlement in the Banff area than had those resources upon which the other communities owed their presence. The parties professing "discovery" of the springs in 1882, shared a common optimism with respect to

*Adapted from a report by Robert C. Scace
the long-term commercial implications of the phenomena but their vigorous attempts to acquire ownership were forestalled by the government.

The decision to reserve an area of ten square miles on Sulphur Mountain in 1885, came from William Pearce who as Superintendent of Mines in the Department of the Interior, was instrumental in the establishment of many of today's western National Parks. Settlement other than with government approval was forbidden within the reserve's confines, incumbent squatters having to accept the tenure arrangements by which land would become available.

Dominion administrators seemingly had but one primary purpose for the Banff area - acquisition of the hot springs for public use and their protection against commercial exploitation. Sir Thomas White, Minister of the Interior, anticipated that Canadians and Americans would be attracted to Banff:

.....not only by the virtue of the waters, but also by the beauty of the scenery and the excellence of the climate, and it is very important that the springs be managed from the beginning in the best possible manner.

Government concern as to the cost of proposed developments at Banff was in part alleviated by the active cooperation of the C.P.R. which saw a financial opportunity in the traffic that this and other mountain resorts might generate.

Developments at Banff were intended to follow the pattern established at the spa of Hot Springs, Arkansas. As plans for the spa were being put into effect, events occurred which led to the extension of the original reserve and its designation as Rocky Mountains (Banff) Park on June 23, 1887. The spa was incorporated in the 10 by 26 mile rectangle which constituted Canada's first National Park.

Later, the Park boundary was to vacillate, the Park's overall growth being indicative of a preserve idea beyond that connected with the hot springs. The presence of a large Park area about the original spa obviously was to be influential in the growth and development of a townsite at Banff. Moreover, the government's desire to have control of all land designated as a Park should be noted. This control committed the federal body to direct responsibility for future land uses and their management throughout the National Park.

Surveys for the spa which was to be located adjacent to the original reserve, were begun in 1886. Blocks were designed in such a way as to seemingly resemble contemporary planned spas in Europe, and in 1887, Prime Minister MacDonald optimistically reported:

I have no doubt that (Banff) will become a great watering-place and that there will be a large town on the south side of the Bow River, where the government have laid out a town plot. I have no doubt that the Canadian Pacific Railway will lay out a town plot there.

He added that:

..... a portion of the park offers some beautiful sites for villas, and I believe the plan of the architect lays these out, to be leased to people of wealth, who will erect handsome buildings upon them.
While regulations for the management of the spa and Banff Park were to be primarily based upon those applied to Arkansas Hot Springs Reserve (and not upon the Yellowstone Park example, as one might suppose), the government nevertheless expressed concern as to the adequacy of these regulations insofar as they had influenced conditions at the American spa. In Arkansas, a lack of federal interest and control had enabled the townsite of Hot Springs to develop, primarily through commercial exploitation of private land about the hot mineral springs.

Interior Minister White underlined Banff's advantage:

..... commencing as we do at Banff with a clean slate, it appears possible to adopt such regulations as would minimize the evils complained of at the Hot Springs of Arkansas .....  

LAND TENURE

The form of land tenure to be applied to Banff became a focus for discussion amongst Park administrators.

Parliament sought to establish some form of land tenure which would evade the problems associated with freehold at Hot Springs yet produce revenue to the Crown from a spa of hoped-for international repute. The plan called for a system which would place the government in a position of absolute control of land uses.

According to the Park Act of 1887, regulations might be effected for:

..... the lease for any term of years of such parcels of land in the park (the Governor in Council) deems advisable in the public interest, for the construction of buildings for ordinary habitation and purposes of trade and industry, and for the accommodation of persons resorting to the park.

It was believed that a leasing system would provide the government with "full and thorough control" of the Park, and would enable it to "impose conditions which will prevent the introduction of much that is to be found in such places, and which is not desirable should prevail." Distribution of Crown land on a freehold basis it was feared, might induce a general decline in the quality of land use and the government's ability to manage municipal developments.

Decisions were required as to periods of tenure and the right to renewal. Lease periods of twenty-one years were suggested but opposed on the grounds that people would not build handsome houses on 21 year leases. It was argued that if there was to be a limit at all, there must be the right of renewal. This argument won and leases were issued with a renewable "in perpetuity" clause. These so-called "perpetual leases" provided for a constant annual rental to the government for the first forty-two years at the end of which period a review of rental would take place. Thereafter, leases would be renewed for a like term of years under similar conditions of tenure. Transfers of lease were possible but only in the event of government consent.
Annual rentals for lots ranged from $2.50 to $10.00, individual rents being determined arbitrarily on the size, quality and intended use of lots. The rentals produced an insufficient revenue relative to overall operating costs yet even by 1912, lots were available at $8.00 to $15.00.

The leasing system had long-term implications because the leases were issued to cover long periods and could be renewed indefinitely. Later government modifications to the lease did not fundamentally change its character until after 1958. The basic issues of right to lease renewal, maintenance of quality in land use, etc., which proved contentious in the 1880's were to become so again after 1958 when visitor pressures on existing facilities required that existing tenure arrangements be re-evaluated. In short, the form of tenure which the government thought best to assist the development of an exclusive spa survived the function it was originally intended to fulfill and was applied to a fully-developed National Park townsite.

CONTROLLING GROUPS

The Dominion Government and C.P.R. Company dominated early developments in and about the spa of Banff.

The Dominion Government. Government activities or services took many forms. Limited appropriations required that the Department of the Interior concentrate on certain facilities, being guided by its own concept of development priorities. Thus, improvements to the hot springs and the local landscape, the preparation of a coach-road network, (today's network), and the introduction of certain resort-like facilities usually exhausted annual appropriations to 1900. Thereafter, the introduction of some municipal services to the growing community broadened the range of facilities amongst which appropriations had to be distributed.

The landscape "improvements" and facilities provided are of interest. Trees and other vegetation were planted periodically to compensate for the repeated decimation of the area by natural and man-made fires. Stumps "and other unsightly objects" were removed. Government facilities ranged from a weather station, the date from which was much publicized, to a Museum of Natural History, animal paddock, zoo and aviary. A variety of exotics, some introduced by the C.P.R., inhabited the faunal enclosures.

Municipal-type service provision really began with the original village surveys and introduction of cheap, long-term leases. There was as yet, little agitation from the residential population for service improvements but as early as 1909, local dissatisfaction was expressed over water and sewer rates.

Federal assumption of the role of municipal government permitted administrators to initiate services as they saw fit but also implied a willingness to become responsible for the provision of most of the public services that would be needed in the village. Banff's isolation at this time necessitated federal responsibility with occasional exceptions, as in the provision of electricity by the C.P.R. from its coal town at Bankhead. Doubtless, no one visualized the variety of services that would be required (or demanded), and the costs that would be involved as the townsite developed. However, the casual introduction of municipal services in the nineteenth century established the precedent which committed the government to its role of provider in the future.
Because Banff and other permanent Park communities were integral units within the boundaries of their respective Parks, municipal-type services were not functionally separated from general Park administration. Consequently, financial records for Banff Park were not used to establish the basis of charges to residents for services and utilities in the townsite. Many types of service charges levied at various times were not based upon any one financial policy. The system, which persists, has been described by administrators as "complicated, difficult to administer and impossible to defend on the basis of real economic values."

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The monopolistic privileges enjoyed by the C.P.R. in the western Parks as a whole reflected contemporary procedure in many American Parks where railroads were the principal means of access to the public lands. Profiting from its seeming monopoly in the "villa" section of Banff, the C.P.R. constructed the impressive Banff Springs Hotel and was associated with other prominent hostelries erected near the hot springs. The Company advertised the Park in an effort to attract a fashionable clientele from throughout North America and Europe. The desired patronage developed and visitations to Banff increased from 3,000 visitors in 1887 to 56,400 in 1910.

Because of its broad commitment to spa development, the C.P.R. became a significant agent in decisions relating to the management of Banff.

The Residents. The spa's small but growing resident community was supported by seasonal occupations such as guiding, provisions of accommodations and livery stable operations. For a select few, there was the possibility of large profits.

Yet Banff retained the characteristics of a frontier community. Isolation and casual local administration brought an element of pioneer independence and associated self-centeredness to the community. Banff was permitted no local self-government and no political structure beyond representation through a Member of the House of Commons. Local administration duties were the responsibility of the Park Superintendent.

SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE

The land use implications of the events described were significant. The desired settlement in Banff was undoubtedly stimulated by the land tenure policy. Generally, leases were available to whosoever sought them although exceptions seemingly involved the larger lots. Uncontrolled distribution enabled speculation, and "blanketing" of lots resulted. Lessees anticipated that transfers of lease - a procedure to which the government usually acceded - might prove remunerative. Consequently, residential development took place on widely scattered lots throughout the spa.

Those who retained their leases, were able to influence business development and government schemes for townsite management in later years. As automatic renewal of leases became standard practice in land management from the outset, the influence of private citizens, relative to their possession of leases, could become a very significant factor in community development.
By adopting such a casual attitude towards management, the government rendered impractical, land leasing as a form of land use control. Indeed, something resembling a freehold arrangement resulted from the policy adopted.

**CHANGES IN COMMUNICATIONS AND VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS**

The government at first excluded motor travel in the National Parks, but eventually embarked upon a road construction program. Later improvements culminated with the opening of the Trans-Canada route in 1958-59.

This shift in government policy stemmed, in part, from pressures exerted by regional citizens groups, but more so from the "big revenue" which administrators hoped the motoring public would yield.

Roads and their improvement progressively removed Banff's isolation; permitted mass access and in association with boundary amendments and other circumstances, made the village the focus of human influence in the Park. Beyond its immediate limits, the wildlands extended in graduated degrees to reach a climax in little used "wilderness areas", such as the upper Red Deer River valley.

**GROWTH OF THE RESORT**

The original concept of Banff as a spa can not fully account for the degree and character of settlement and development which occurred during the period of 1911 to 1945. Certain new functions such as Banff's role as a summer home colony, entertainment and education center contributed towards one main function: that of Banff as a recreation focus or resort town.

Additional blocks were surveyed and opened to the public at various times, and land uses occupied what might at first be thought of as distinct categories: residential, commercial and institutional. Yet properties thus categorized operated in many instances in a recreational capacity as, for example, in the provision of tourist accommodations. A variety of urban developments, many of them viewed as undesirable yet left uncontrolled, hardly conformed to the high quality developments originally visualized for Banff. Most lots carried land-consuming single-family dwellings, many functioning as summer homes.

A broad range of businesses and commercial activities were permitted, and invariably duplicated, many being oriented towards meeting the recreational needs of the public, while others reflected the needs of any resident population.

Public and institutional land uses such as schools, churches, etc., were comparable to those found in any provincial municipality of similar size. These facilities had been introduced at an early date and were recognized by the government as being essential to townsite growth. Functional specialization did occur insofar as many properties were required for Park administration and maintenance, and also in the establishment of Banff School of Fine Arts on Tunnel Mountain.
Urban growth called for a broader application of the government's service policy and larger appropriations to support it. Introduction or improvement of services often followed visitor's complaints or, more usually, local agitations. Residents, businesses and organizations made no contribution towards the cost of most of the services and were subsidized where charges were made. In instances such as hospital, welfare and education services, responsibility lay elsewhere and made for a growing provincial interest in the development of Banff.

CONTROLLING GROUPS AND AGENCIES

The development of Banff was strongly influenced, if not controlled, by the federal government, the C.P.R. and residents. New influences noted hereunder were not destined to become really effective until after 1945.

The Federal Government. The mechanisms for land management were as previously described, but stress on development rather than control facilitated, for example, continued issue of "perpetual" leases. Thus by 1967, 741 leases were operative out of a total of 949 for the townsite. A speculator's market in leases persisted and despite some efforts at control, ground rents remained low. As late as 1950 "prevailing residential rentals" were reported as being $8.00 per lot. By 1960, the highest rental totaled only $100.

Low rentals together with subsidized municipal services, implied a situation increasingly to a resident's advantage, especially as service costs to the government rose through municipal improvements.

The only use of freehold powers by the government was to require leaseholders to improve the standard of maintenance of their property before renewals of leases or consents to assign or sub-lease were made.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Changing social habits brought changes in the C.P.R.'s program and it began to advertise to attract the general public. The Winter Carnival, Banff Regatta, Banff Springs Highland Gathering, etc., were designed to establish traditions for Banff.

Because the C.P.R. was permitted so much scope for development, land use conflicts seemed inevitable at some stage. For example, a government campground made way for expansion of the Company's golf course and the C.P.R. was instrumental in the siting of the airfield. The Company was having a say in local developments to the point where the government no longer made independent decisions.

The Residents. From the outset, federal support of free-enterprise facilitated diverse private undertakings. The arrangement precipitated residential demands for organized representation and the right to pursue liberally-controlled promotions. Since, in such circumstances, political patronage and region support generally stood behind the free-enterprise motive, many local aspirations were acceded to by the government.
An unusual but very significant agent for change was Banff School of Fine Arts, established in the townsite in the 1930's. The School's main expansion came after 1945.

The Provincial Government. During the 1960's, in response to the federal government's decision to apply more rigorous controls to land use in townsites, particularly through a revised leasing policy, the government of Alberta lobbied strongly for a liberalized facilities-development policy. Ultimately, in 1968, the Alberta Legislature unanimously supported a resolution that Park townsites in the province be placed under provincial jurisdiction, ostensibly to terminate supposedly "unfair" treatment of lessees and entrepreneurs but more probably to facilitate added commercial development.

The recreational industry was a major exception to the policy of excluding commercial activities from Banff Park. Hence, in the Banff townsite area, a focus of facilities-oriented recreational activity, the emphasis lay primarily with the development of a landscape where little importance was attached to man's impact upon biotic processes: the pollution of the Bow River, for example.

BANFF AS A SERVICE CENTER

Tremendous increases in public use of National Parks after 1945 necessitated a reappraisal of existing townsite management procedures as well as the whole of Parks policy. Following studies on townsite administration, on land use problems in townsites, and on revenue and rental matters, formal Parks policy statements were introduced in 1964 and 1965. These state in general terms how the government proposes to maintain the quality of Parks while accommodating the people who visit them.

Park lands will be zoned according to prescribed land uses, existing urban communities and other selected sites such as Lake Louise and Saskatchewan River Crossing, being designated as "visitor service centers" in zones of maximum public use.

In these centers leases which do not carry the guarantee of renewal will be available to residents and entrepreneurs alike. Improvements by lessees on their lots will ultimately revert to the Crown with compensation being paid only in cases of residential leaseholds. Permanent residence in Parks will be restricted to those persons engaged in the administration of the Parks or the supply of necessary visitor services.

Theoretically, in existing townsites, the revamped leasing policy will facilitate government control of land uses, eliminating other groups from influencing administrative decisions. Yet, the selection of Banff as the first of the service centers has prompted self-interested groups to oppose the practical aspects of revised policy.
In new service centers such as Lake Louise, only basic services will supposedly be introduced. But will not Lake Louise eventually develop into another Banff? When does a "service center" cease to function as such and become instead just another "townsite"? How do we avoid the emergence of pressure groups such as those identified for Banff wherever new Park populations are established? Will additional service centers in future years create more urban nuclei in our Parks? Are the services to be provided in the centers compatible with National Parks purposes?

The wisdom of introducing these service centers together with additional roads such as that proposed for the upper Red Deer River valley, must be evaluated in the long run. But significantly, present policy concerning the operation of existing townsites seeks only to accomplish what Park administrators proposed in the 19th century - comprehensive land use control through the use of leases, licenses, etc. Only, today's planners no longer have the clean slate of undeveloped land on which to attain their objectives, and must seek solutions to the land use dilemma created by their predecessors.