

## New Settlements Policy in British Columbia

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Résumé de l'article

Entre 1965 et 1972, le gouvernement provincial de la Colombie-Britannique inaugurerait une nouvelle politique touchant les villes d'industrie extractive et visant à modifier les rapports entre les corporations, le gouvernement provincial et les établissements basés sur l'exploitation des ressources naturelles. La loi appelée « Instant Towns Act » assortie de la création de nouvelles municipalités représentait un nouveau palier de participation et d'intervention du gouvernement dans ces villes. La politique servait à transférer des compagnies à la population active les coûts d'installation des villes et à rationaliser la participation ultérieure de l'État aux activités d'extraction. Le gouvernement provincial et les compagnies estimaient qu'il était nécessaire d'avoir une nouvelle politique régissant les établissements afin de remplacer l'ancien modèle de villes appartenant à des compagnies et d'attirer une main-d'œuvre nouvelle et plus stable. En même temps que s'élaborait cette politique, le gouvernement s'engageait dans un processus de développement de l'infrastructure industrielle pour faciliter l'expansion ainsi que l'évolution des besoins en matière de capitaux. La nouvelle loi « Instant Towns » de 1965 faisait partie de la législation touchant l'expansion des grosses sociétés dans le secteur de l'extraction des ressources naturelles. Cette forme de planification de l'infrastructure qui doit coïncider avec l'évolution de la structure en matière de capitaux, représente un niveau d'intervention de l'État dans l'économie de la Colombie-Britannique, dans celle d'autres provinces canadiennes et en fait dans la plupart des sociétés capitalistes occidentales au cours des dernières années.

## NEW SETTLEMENTS POLICY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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*J. H. Bradbury*

### ABSTRACT/RESUME

Between 1965 and 1972 the provincial government of British Columbia introduced a new resource towns policy aimed at changing the relationship between corporations, the provincial government, and resource based settlements. The Instant Towns Act, together with the creation of new municipalities, represented a new level of government involvement and intervention in resource towns. The policy served to pass townsite costs from the companies to the workforce and to rationalise the further involvement of the state in resource extraction activities. The provincial government and the companies argued that a new settlements policy was necessary to replace the older model of company towns in order to attract a new and more stable labour force. At the same time as this policy was being shaped, the government was also engaged in developing industrial infrastructure to facilitate the expansion and the changing needs of capital. The Instant Towns Act of 1965 was part of the legislation for the expansion of large firms in the resource extraction sector. This form of infrastructure planning, to coincide with the changing structure of capital, reflects a level of state intervention in the economy of British Columbia, in other Canadian provinces, and indeed in most other western capitalist societies in recent years.

Entre 1965 et 1972, le gouvernement provincial de la Colombie-Britannique inaugurerait une nouvelle politique touchant les villes d'industrie extractive et visant à modifier les rapports entre les corporations, le gouvernement provincial et les établissements basés sur l'exploitation des ressources naturelles. La loi appelée "Instant Towns Act" assortie de la création de nouvelles municipalités représentait un nouveau palier de participation et d'intervention du gouvernement dans ces villes. La politique servait à transférer des compagnies à la population active les coûts d'installation des villes et à rationaliser la participation ultérieure de l'Etat aux activités d'extraction. Le gouvernement provincial et les compagnies estimaient qu'il était nécessaire d'avoir une nouvelle politique régissant les établissements afin de remplacer l'ancien modèle de villes appartenant à des compagnies et d'attirer une main-d'oeuvre nouvelle et plus stable. En même temps que s'élaborait cette politique, le gouvernement s'engageait dans un processus de développement de l'infrastructure industrielle pour faciliter l'expansion ainsi que l'évolution des besoins en matière de capitaux. La nouvelle loi "Instant Towns" de 1965 faisait partie de la législation touchant l'expansion des grosses sociétés dans le secteur de l'extraction des ressources naturelles. Cette forme de planification de l'infrastructure qui doit coïncider avec l'évolution de la structure en matière de capitaux,

représente un niveau d'intervention de l'Etat dans l'économie de la Colombie-Britannique, dans celle d'autres provinces canadiennes et en fait dans la plupart des sociétés capitalistes occidentales au cours des dernières années.

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New towns in Canada have largely been resource towns as Pressman and Lauder have pointed out in a recent issue of Urban History Review. "Government involvement in the development of resource communities," they argued, "has, until very recently, been rare."<sup>1</sup> In fact, government involvement has been more widespread than their statement suggests. This paper will examine the role of the state in the promotion of new settlements in British Columbia. Between 1952 and 1972 W.A.C. Bennett's Social Credit Government embarked on a massive promotion of resource extraction industries such as mining and pulpwood. As in other Canadian provinces this was a period of expansion. Multinational companies were courted and encouraged in the resource sector. Bennett's government built roads, bridges and railways, created special tree farm license areas and passed laws facilitating large scale resource extraction, thus building up the infrastructure necessary for efficient resource extraction.<sup>2</sup>

The provision of infrastructure was not the only form of government involvement. Their promotional and facilitative role included the articulation of a new policy on resource site settlements, which became law under the Instant Towns Act of 1965.<sup>3</sup> The legislation is interesting because it attempted to provide a rationale for new town planning and to overcome the social and economic problems traditionally associated with

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<sup>1</sup>N. Pressman and K. Lauder, "Resource Towns as New Towns," in Urban History Review, No. 1-78 (June, 1978), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup>J.H. Bradbury, "Instant Towns in British Columbia - 1965 to 1972," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, 1977, pp. 99-160.

<sup>3</sup>British Columbia, Revised Statutes of B.C. 1965, Section 10A Municipal Act, Chapter 255, p. 2991.

isolated company towns. The policy also included legislation to change all company towns into municipalities with elected councils. The legislation could not solve all the recognized social and economic problems. Rather, it served to pass townsite costs from the companies to the resident workers, and to rationalize the involvement of the state in resource extraction activities in the province. This government involvement in the complete recasting of the nature of settlements was in direct contrast to the first company town law passed in British Columbia in 1918 in which the government had passed legislation which merely attempted to increase public access to company property and towns.

At the same time as the provincial government was creating an infrastructure for corporate development it was also responding to the changing type and the changing needs of capital. Between 1918 and 1972, and especially after 1952, with the penetration by externally controlled firms, and by direct foreign investment from Europe, Japan and the United States, the provincial government began to create infrastructures as well as provide facilitative laws. The Instant Towns Act of 1965 was part of this legislation.

#### The Facilitative Role of the Social Credit Government

Part of the facilitative role of the Bennett government evolved from the promotion of the provincial department of Municipal Affairs as 'new-town maker' between 1964 and 1972. The administrative and legal impetus for new settlements came from the Department of Municipal Affairs and in particular from the minister and several of his senior officials. Following negotiations with resource companies and residents of the company towns in the province, the Minister devised a legal framework for the new settlements in the form of a special section of the Provincial Municipal Act. Section 10A of the Municipal Act of B.C. enabled the provincial government to engage in an urban renewal programme to remove older company towns and to institute a framework to facilitate and control the development of a series of new towns. Both the provincial minister and the corporations involved endeavoured to shape an image of a metropolitan suburban community in the hinterland in an attempt to replace the older model of company towns, and to attract a new kind of workforce. The companies claimed that it was necessary to attract a different workforce,

rather than just improve working conditions, because of the high labour turnover and the apparent social instability of many isolated, male-dominated, single-company resource towns.<sup>4</sup>

The provincial Department of Municipal Affairs controlled the shape and extent of settlement growth through a system of land grants, Letters Patent containing specific directives, and community planning designs and regulations. The result of these devices and regulations was the forging of a new set of metropolis-hinterland relationships between the new instant towns in the province and the central authority vested in the head offices of companies in Vancouver and other metropolitan centres. This same process also meant that continued liaison between the Department of Municipal Affairs and the corporations was necessary for the establishment of new resource towns.<sup>5</sup>

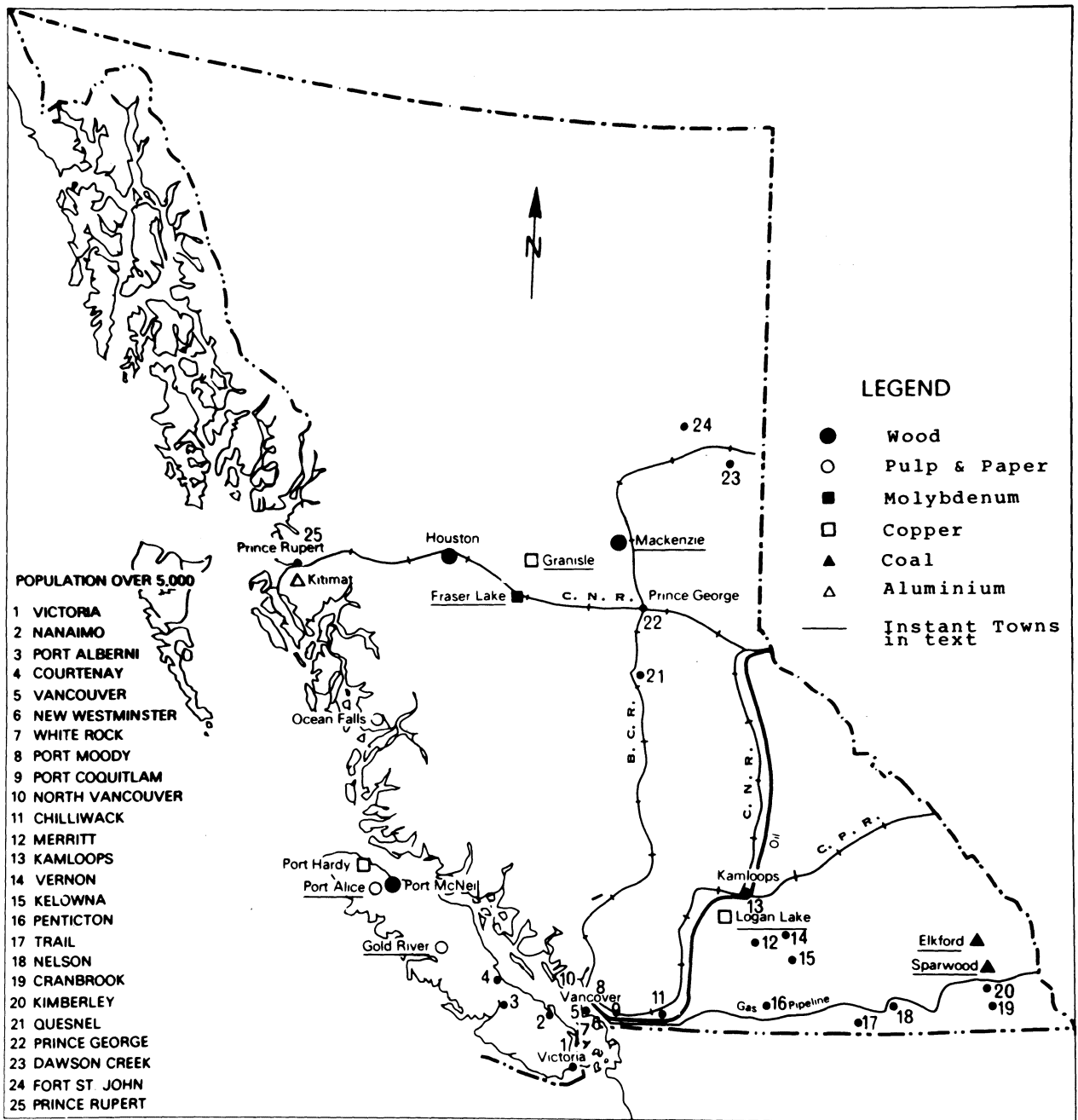
Between 1964 and 1972 a total of eight resource towns were constructed in British Columbia under the new legislation and the direction given by the Department of Municipal Affairs (see Map I).<sup>6</sup> The entrance of the provincial government into direct liaison with resource extraction companies came after a period of almost complete corporate control of resource settlement in the province. Prior to the instant towns legislation of 1965, the settlements attached to resource extraction sites were owned, operated and controlled by the corporation engaged in mining or milling. After 1965 the provincially instituted legislation which granted self-government to each settlement, removed ownership of the town-sites from corporate to local control, and absolved the companies of the responsibility and costs of running their single-enterprise settlements. While this process appeared to give local control over the settlements, the provincial government in fact retained a degree of control over the

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<sup>4</sup>See G.A. Stelter and A.F.J. Artibise, "Canadian Resource Towns in Historical Perspective," Plan Canada, Vol. 18, No. 1 (March, 1978), pp. 7-16.

<sup>5</sup>E.J. Brown, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, Province of B.C., 1964-1972, personal communication, July 1974.

<sup>6</sup>The list of resource towns includes: Elkford, Fraser Lake, Gold River, Granisle, Logan Lake, MacKenzie, Port Alice, Sparwood.



Selected Instant Towns and other Urban Centres in British Columbia, 1972.

affairs and financing of the towns. The corporations continued to control the *raison d'être* of each settlement, while the costs of running the settlements and providing housing and other infrastructure became the responsibility of the local citizens and the workforce.

The government's attempts to facilitate the growth of monopoly enterprises in the forest and mining industries (*vis-à-vis* Bennett's expansionist policy) was designed to fit the overall endeavour to maximize the efficiency of monopoly enterprise. Viewed in the context of government taking over what was traditionally a corporate role in the hinterland settlements, the policy was an enigma. By transferring the social overhead costs of resource extraction from companies to workers, the Social Credit government clearly undertook a further and more specific role within its overall expansionist policy.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the legislation of 1964 provided a formula for closer and more efficient government-company cooperation as well as a maximization of the efficiency of corporations within the province.

#### Historical Context of Company Towns in British Columbia

The settlement policy arising from the instant towns legislation in 1964 evolved within the historical context of a changing relationship between the government and the resource extraction companies in British Columbia. Until 1964 the building of company-owned towns and villages next to resource extraction sites had been the usual method of providing accommodation for British Columbian mine and mill workers.<sup>8</sup> Some of these died when the companies left; others survived to become incorporated cities.

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<sup>7</sup> See general theoretical comments on the role of the State in: R. Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society (London: Quartet Books, 1973); J. O'Connor, The Corporations and the State (New York: Harper Colophon, 1974); L. Panitch, ed., The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> W.M. Mercer, "Growth of ghost towns: the decline of forest activity in the East Kootenay district and the effect of the growth of ghost towns on the distributing centres of Cranbrook and Fernie," Submission to the Royal Commission of Forestry, February, 1944, Victoria, B.C. (Unpublished paper, Special Collections, Legislature Library, Victoria, B.C.); and H.A. Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier, Canadian Frontiers of Settlement (Toronto: Macmillan, 1936), pp. 270-320.

Innis, for instance, describes the settlements created for mining operations in the East Kootenay region of the province near Rossland and Trail in the 1890s. These two communities later evolved into permanent settlements and were incorporated as cities in 1897 and 1901 respectively.<sup>9</sup> The discovery of lead ore in the Slocan district led to the creation of Slocan which was incorporated in 1891.<sup>10</sup> Coal mining provided the *raison d'être* for most company towns in the province in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The town of Fernie was incorporated in 1904, whereas the two coal mining villages in the Crow's Nest Pass area, Natal and Michel, although started in 1897, were not incorporated until 1960. Coal had been discovered in the Crow's Nest region in 1873. It was mined at Michel and the houses were rented to miners by the company. As the colliery grew, the Crow's Nest Pass Company expanded the settlement at Michel but, in 1907, when there was little space left, the company sold lots to workers at the nearby site of Natal. When these two areas were settled the strip between the two villages, which came to be called Middletown, was the site for expansion. (Natal and Michel were removed under an urban renewal programme in 1968 and replaced by the new town of Sparwood). Mining towns were also incorporated at Greenwood in 1897 to serve the heavy metal mining industry in the West Kootenays, and at Ladysmith in 1904 to serve several coal mines on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Another company town, Cumberland, incorporated in 1898, served the coal mining industry on east Vancouver Island.<sup>11</sup>

The establishment of a pulp and paper industry in British Columbia after 1915 produced a number of company towns attached to pulp mills. With few exceptions the paper mill company towns remained in service for longer periods than the mining towns built in the early part of this century. Paper mill towns, such as Powell River, Port Alice,

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<sup>9</sup> British Columbia, Municipal Statistics Including Regional Districts, Department of Municipal Affairs, Victoria, B.C., 1970, p. 179.

<sup>10</sup> Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier, p. 278.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 283.



and Ocean Falls, were built between 1915 and 1930. Powell River was not incorporated until 1955 and Port Alice only became incorporated in 1965 after the building of a new town and the abandonment of the old company town. There were numerous other company settlements in the province, all established for one specific purpose--to serve the resource extraction industry and the company which built them. Many, like Bralorne, Britannia Beach or Fraser Mills, declined along with their parent company, or dissolved when substitute settlements were created, or when timber sources dried up or mines or mills were abandoned or temporarily closed down.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the 1964 legislation, most company towns existed outside the municipal laws applied to other urban settlements. Attempts had been made, in 1919 and 1948, to penetrate the overall control maintained by the companies over their towns, but little was attempted in terms of changing the ownership of the settlement or altering the ownership of the means of production by large corporate bodies.<sup>13</sup>

The impact of corporate ownership in the company towns was by no means insignificant or immeasurable. The companies, for instance, exercised ownership and control over land, housing, recreation, plant, and all assets and facilities of the community including hotels, hospitals, golf courses, churches and movie theatres. Walker remarked in 1953 that the corporations in all of Canada's company towns exercised a great deal of influence over workers' settlements, communities and resource operations,

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<sup>12</sup>A more comprehensive listing of settlements could have included Britannia Beach and Fraser Mills but this list is by no means complete, nor is it intended to be so. For a more thorough coverage, see M. Robin, The Rush for Spoils: The Company Province 1871-1933 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1972); and Mercer, "Growth of Ghost Towns."

<sup>13</sup>British Columbia, "An Act to Make Provisions for Access by the Public to Company Towns," B.C. Statutes, Company Town Regulations, Chapter 1A, March 1919, pp. 47-49; and Ibid., B.C. Statutes, Company Town Regulations, Chapter 63, Victoria, B.C., 1948, pp. 751-53.

by virtue of the ownership characteristics common to each.<sup>14</sup> He claimed that because each town existed outside the set of laws defined for urban areas in Canada, the residents of company towns were effectively disenfranchised by virtue of the fact that the company owned all land and estate in the settlements. In addition, company control was extended to locking the workforce into the system by means of the company store and an all-embracing system of credit. Moreover, company paternalism and company ownership of the means of production and control over levels of production meant that the companies could exert a great deal of direct and indirect power locally, which they did.

British Columbia's Company Town Acts of 1919 and 1948, mentioned above, aimed only to increase public access to company-owned settlements and to establish the right of access for the general public to company-owned wharves and roads, and the freedom to move through settlements on company-owned streets. According to Walker, the 1919 Act was thought to be necessary in the days when government officials, union organizers, travelling salesmen and others were informed that they could not land on the company wharves or they would be trespassing on private property.<sup>15</sup> According to the Honourable T.D. Pattullo, Lands Minister in the H.C. Brewster Liberal government in 1919:

... the Companies exercised autocratic powers in the way of administration, the allowing or refusing of entry to persons other than those they [were] willing to admit, and while at such centres there [were] ... facilities provided by the province, and other public facilities, the towns [were] wholly controlled and governed by the companies.<sup>16</sup>

Pattullo proposed a bill which required that all companies register a plan with the government, outlining the streets, lots and subdivisions in their town sites. By such means Pattullo hoped to

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<sup>14</sup>H.W. Walker, Single Enterprise Communities in Canada, a Report to Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation by the Institute of Local Government, Queen's University, 1953, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Walker, Single Enterprise Communities, p. 57.

<sup>16</sup>Daily Colonist, June 29, 1917, p. 7.

facilitate the expansion of "outside interests in the business of the town" and to convey to the province a one quarter interest in the town lots.

Between the first introduction of Pattullo's Bill and the second reading in 1919 however, the owners of company settlements objected to the plans which involved the government taking 25 per cent of their land within the townsites. Attorney General Farris doubted whether the province could take a quarter of the companies' lands because the settlements were not considered as legally designated townsites under the meaning of the Lands Act.<sup>17</sup> According to J.H. Hawthornthwaite, the Socialist member for Newcastle, the Bill did not change the ultimate and absolute control of the companies. The Bill, he thought, "... gave little more than the right to the public to walk the streets, but workers could not hold meetings in the towns."<sup>18</sup>

A further Bill aimed at revamping company town administration and corporate control was introduced by an opposition member in 1937. The CCF member for Comox attempted to modify company control by changing:

... all employees living in company towns and camps into tenants of the employer with all the usual rights and privileges of tenants. The new Act, Cameron told the House, was designated to protect the rights of working men in such places as logging camps where they did not enjoy the rights of other people, and whose contacts with the outside world were entirely at the whim of the company.<sup>19</sup>

The Bill was defeated in 1937 but was reintroduced annually by the CCF opposition until 1946.

#### Social Credit Policy in British Columbia

By the time the Social Credit government under W.A.C. Bennett came into power in 1952, the legislation relating to company-owned resource settlements had been modified by giving greater public access to

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<sup>17</sup> Victoria Daily Times, February 26, 1919, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Daily Colonist, February 27, 1919, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Vancouver Province, November 25, 1937, p. 26.

company towns. In 1944 for instance the post-war rehabilitation council in British Columbia had recommended legislation to give legal access to company towns to individuals other than employees and companies and to place company communities on a basis similar to others.<sup>20</sup> The ownership and control of settlements and land by companies, however, remained unaltered. Between 1954 and 1959 no attempts were made to alter the status of resource settlements in the province. They remained the domain of what Dan Campbell, the Social Credit MLA for northern Vancouver Island, called "... the lordly, lord of the manor logging firms."<sup>21</sup> However, there were changes implemented in the resource industries themselves in the 1960s which eventually effected the company-owned settlements. Ray Williston and Premier W.A.C. Bennett promoted an expansionist policy between 1954 and 1960. Williston in particular was responsible for changes in forest tenure and industrial policy which significantly altered the ownership and investment patterns in British Columbia's resource industries. In addition, the province's Roads-to-Resources programme, and a new principle of resource management called Multiple Use Policy, meant that government intervention in what were traditionally corporate affairs was at least becoming more prevalent, if not more acceptable to industry.

The provincial government under the impetus of MLA Dan Campbell, who was made Minister of Municipal Affairs in 1962, wished to rationalize the long-standing conflicts over access and control that had been occurring in company-owned resource settlements. However the intrusion of government into corporate policy presented several problems which were philosophical as much as they were constitutional. Whether to interfere in corporate affairs or whether to maintain equanimity and let the corporations control their own territories became as much a contradiction as it was a question of philosophy. The problem was resolved in the following manner: private enterprise was the means whereby growth occurred during

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., February 25, 1944, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup>Victoria Colonist, October 28, 1959, p. 1; and Victoria Daily Times, October 28, 1959, p. 22.

the expansionist period. To attract further investments and to maximize the efficiency of the operations of private enterprise, government needed a secure and operational settlements policy to absolve the corporations of the costs and responsibilities in the resource towns of the province. Thus, interference in corporate affairs by attempting to legislate changes in company towns became not a question of contradiction of philosophy but one of the articulation of a policy by which the Social Credit government could maximize the efficiency of the operations of private enterprise.

There were several major differences between the early proposals by CCF politicians and the legislation introduced by the Social Credit party in 1965. The early proposals were by radicals, and some liberals, who were attempting to crack the pervasive company control over both the workplace and the community. The legislation introduced by the Bennett government was, in contrast, an attempt to work very closely with the companies to absolve the latter of responsibility for increasingly expensive townsite maintenance and to attract a modern and stable workforce.

The overall process of policy change discussed here is consistent with a pattern evidenced by D. Harvey in North American company towns in the 19th and 20th centuries. Harvey argues that, based on experiences in the company town of Pullman in 1894, when there were a number of strikes, companies since then have tried to bring about change by:

... the privatization of housing provision, the creation of a separate housing landlord class, and the creation of innumerable intermediaries in the retail and wholesale sector, and the government provision of social services and public goods ....<sup>22</sup>

These actions are aimed at externalizing the costs of labour, ensuring the continuity of a more stable labour supply and facilitating the reproduction of labour power. It was largely for these reasons that the policies in British Columbia in the 1960s were created. It was for

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<sup>22</sup> D. Harvey, "Labour, Capital, and Class Struggle around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies," Politics and Society, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1976), pp. 272-75.

these very reasons also that industrial capitalists investing in the province sought to create instant towns, withdrawing from almost all direct involvement in the provision, financing or management of resource settlements.<sup>23</sup>

The Role of Campbell as Minister of Municipal Affairs - 1962 to 1972

As an MLA in the British Columbia legislature, Campbell observed the increasing numbers of multinational companies, the dominance of large foreign companies over vast territories of resources and settlements, and the roughshod character of the unincorporated settlements and company towns of the province. In order to facilitate more effective government control over these circumstances Campbell's department instituted two major revisions of jurisdiction. The first was related to the establishment of a regional district policy to control unorganized territories outside urban areas and the second was the instant town legislation of 1965. The methods employed by Campbell's department in the initiation of this specialized role of government represented a definitive change in the relationships between big business and the state in the province.

Campbell was regularly critical of the role of big companies in the forest industry, of the lack of access to forest lands for the public, and the 'shacktowns' the companies built for their workers. Indeed, he joined with the CCF opposition in attacking the company-state relationships in the province which the CCF had continually criticized since the introduction of the Cameron bill in 1937. There were several examples of what he called 'corporate manors' in his own riding on Vancouver Island. Campbell commenced his attacks there. He claims that: "... communities of the riding could not grow without proper access roads," and furthermore, "... access roads were the proper functioning of government, not of private companies (particularly when they concerned the public)."<sup>24</sup> He accordingly suggested that the provincial government

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<sup>23</sup>J.H. Bradbury, "Class Structures and Class Conflicts in 'Instant' Resource Towns in British Columbia - 1965 to 1972," BC Studies, No. 37 (Summer 1978), p. 4.

<sup>24</sup>Victoria Daily Times, February 16, 1961, p. 6.

should establish regional access commissions which would investigate the costs and feasibility, vis-à-vis the Forest and Lands Acts, of government roads in corporation controlled territories. However, the mining and logging companies owned not the land but full access rights to specified territory and to resources, and Campbell's proposals involved an alienation of the previously accepted corporate rights in those territories.

In 1964 Campbell claimed in the legislature that the Tree Farm License system instituted by Williston was the major reason for the shacktowns associated with resource development in his riding. "Tree farm licenses have created shackhouses on Vancouver Island and something should be done about it," he said. He singled out the communities of Kelsey Bay, Sayward and Port Hardy, all centres of large corporate forest activity, "as disgraceful blots on the landscape where people have to live in shacks."<sup>25</sup> At the same time he commented on the strong grip of forest companies over access to forest lands owned by the Crown. He claimed that companies in his riding were hostile to visitors and that the actions of one company in particular, the Elk River Timber Company, which had barred the general public on its roads, "made both the government and the people look stupid."<sup>26</sup> According to Campbell, the area controlled by the Elk River Company had become a fishing and sportsmen's paradise for company officials, and one government game warden had found five company officials fishing on company lands off the road, "... all were Americans and not one with a fishing license."<sup>27</sup> Although such fishing escapades were of minor importance, Campbell's use of them as illustrations of corporate dominance in the province was an essential part of his public maneuvering to implement a modified access and settlement scheme in his riding.

In April, 1964, the Municipal Affairs Department launched a

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<sup>25</sup>Victoria Colonist, January 25, 1964, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., January 17, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., January 17, 1961, p. 1.

study of land use in unorganized areas of northern Vancouver Island. The study was "prompted by a concern over the development of shack-towns in industrial areas associated particularly with the logging industry on Vancouver Island," and its "purpose was to evolve planning standards for such communities."<sup>28</sup> Later in 1964, in company with D. South, his planning officer, he toured several communities in northern Vancouver Island, including Port Alice, Port McNeil and Port Hardy, where he held discussions with townspeople and the companies, concluding that: "... bunkhouse living was not considered satisfactory for the majority of persons in resource towns, and that local government was not possible unless individuals were able to own land and housing."<sup>29</sup>

Local self-government, physical planning and local ownership became the cornerstones of Campbell's new settlements policy for the province. Speaking before the sixteenth British Columbia Natural Resources Conference in September 1965, he outlined his expectations for the new policies: "Industrial payrolls at one-site communities should lead to the creation of multi-purpose communities having an effective balance between residential, commercial and industrial enterprise."<sup>30</sup> This wish for multi-purpose towns arising out of one-industry communities was, however, one which could not be realistically fulfilled given the single purpose nature of the forest and mining industries in the province. Indeed the existence of industrial payrolls at one-industry communities had been the basis of company town operations up to that time. The expansion into multi-purpose communities had not taken place within the private monopoly position adopted by industry, and although it was within the purview of the state to wish for multi-purpose communities, it was not to the advantage of private corporations to create them. Campbell continued by stating that:

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., April 22, 1964, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> D.J. Campbell, Minister of Municipal Affairs, British Columbia, 1964-72. Interview with the author, October 2, 1973.

<sup>30</sup> D.J. Campbell, "Instant Towns," in Proceedings of the British Columbia Natural Resources Conference (Victoria, B.C., 1966), p. 115.



... the opportunity for local government is very often and perhaps entirely the result of making decisions on the physical and social servicing of the place called 'home', and therefore, in addition to the community associations which are often designed to do the job well, we would envision the early incorporation of newly developing resource-oriented communities so that effective local decisions on the physical requirements of the homesite can be made under self-government.<sup>31</sup>

While Campbell argued for local self-government as a panacea for the settlements, there were later complaints from the hinterland towns that the costs involved in living in the new towns were too high. In Port Alice on Vancouver Island in 1960 for instance, residents argued that people could not afford the prices of the new town, while at the same time the company argued that it was required to absorb losses on housing costs. Evidence from other towns indicates clearly that the costs of housing rose considerably for residents as did the costs of upkeep of all townsites.<sup>32</sup> In Campbell's own words, the act of obtaining self-government was often regarded as "merely an off-loading of the responsibilities from the company" and a transference of the costs of social overhead from the corporations to the workers.<sup>33</sup>

In an effort to promote private and worker ownership of land and housing within corporate territories, Campbell intended that a "... concept of open community for acquisitions on-site should be encouraged and [the] developments resulting should be subject to the existence of an official community plan."<sup>34</sup> The official community plans were prepared by planning organizations in Vancouver or Calgary and then presented by the townsite owners to Campbell's department for approval. By such

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<sup>31</sup>Campbell, "Instant Towns," 1966, p. 166.

<sup>32</sup>Vancouver Sun, June 5, 1967, p. 22; Ibid., June 3, 1967; Victoria Daily Times, August 22, 1967; Vancouver Sun, July 24, 1968; Ibid., July 10, 1969, p. 68; Vancouver Province, September 9, 1970; Vancouver Sun, August 5, 1971, p. 28; and, Ibid., February 16, 1972.

<sup>33</sup>Campbell, "Interview," 1973.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

means, the previous pattern of corporate control over the nature, shape and socio-economic milieu of the company towns was modified to suit the new needs of the companies.

The government sought to overcome the tendency toward short tenure occupation of resource frontier areas, by creating legislation aimed at more permanent communities.<sup>35</sup> At the 1965 Natural Resources Conference, Campbell said that:

... either the resource based industry can lead to the creation of desirable living conditions or we must consider that the development is perhaps premature, i.e. the standard of housing in these new communities must be far superior to many of the examples of poor housing and inadequate bunkhouse conditions which can be unfortunately, associated with the historical past.<sup>36</sup>

Both the government and the resource corporations were concerned about the high social overhead costs involved in labour turnover in unstable communities. They wanted a less costly and a more efficient workforce which would serve the expansion of the multinational corporations in the 1960s. The workforce in mine and mill towns in the province, and indeed in most single company towns across Canada, was traditionally adjusted to high turnover rates. Mobility was particularly noticeable in specific groups, especially males between 20 and 30 years of age. In addition, Campbell was concerned about the prospects of community health and at one point in his brief to the 1965 Natural Resources Conference, he stated that the "... stability of the work force in a community is as much concerned with the social and physical developments of the community itself as with the conditions on the job."<sup>37</sup> Moreover, he argued that the changes his department wished to institute would overcome many of the 'company town antagonisms' which had been noticeable in the past.<sup>38</sup> Antagonisms related to the feeling of being chained to a single employer

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<sup>35</sup> Victoria Daily Times, April 24, 1964, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Campbell, "Instant Towns," 1966.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Bradbury, "Class Structures and Class Conflicts," pp. 16-17.

in a single company town, and certain employer-employee antagonisms would be, he hoped, diluted by the creation of new settlements. These antagonisms arose from the indications that:

People will no longer tolerate company towns where their lives are dominated by one employer .... Separation of workmen from their families in logging camps and mines ... resulted in stresses and dislocations that society had to pay .... Isolation and parochialism characterize many company towns where regardless of good intentions, ... there is fertile ground for the growth of unnecessary antagonisms.<sup>39</sup>

Newspaper editorials in British Columbia supported Campbell and gave credence to the notion that new towns could overcome the social and economic control exercised by large companies. The Victoria Times, for instance, stated that the measure of security offered by Campbell's plans would attract a new workforce to the hinterlands. Homes of a quality to attract wives and families to a community were assumed to offer a measure of stability for the workforce. The editors claimed that the benefit should be mutual for employers and employees:

Industry can expect better relations with labour when labour is decently and attractively housed in settlements which guarantee adequate services and where life can take on the colour of modern living with amenities beyond those of a more pioneering age. And the province as a whole will benefit if effective protection is raised against shacktowns.<sup>40</sup>

#### The Theory and Practice of Campbell's Settlement Policies

Campbell believed that company towns should be replaced by a new settlement type in which self-government and worker ownership of property would resolve the problem of corporate controls. In practice, however, the distribution of housing and the ownership and control of the means of production in new instant towns remained vested in the large resource corporations.

The movement toward developing what came to be called a

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<sup>39</sup> Vancouver Province, September 11, 1965, p. 24; Ibid., August 23, 1963, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> Victoria Daily Times, April 24, 1964, p. 4.

rational settlement policy in the 1960s, was accompanied by the government's proposals for a regional planning scheme which involved a division of the province into regional administrative districts. The rationale for State intervention in regional settlement growth was based on the expressed needs of the government to obtain and maintain control over forest policies, mining, and regional development in the province, all of which were aimed at providing a more effective and efficient infrastructure for corporate enterprise and monopoly capital.

These concurrent policies were given a spatial dimension by the Municipal Affairs Department based on a central place formula.<sup>41</sup> Regional district boundaries were aligned on an existing school district system but the Municipal Affairs Department attempted to rationalize the location of the instant towns using a central place model. However, the strategy of the model, and the actual deployment of resources bases and settlements within the province, demonstrated that the model could not fit the objectives and the reality of the British Columbia resource frontier in the 1960s.

In British Columbia, the planning for the new towns in the 1960s was performed by the government and the corporations in the metropolitan centres of Vancouver and Victoria. Although Campbell recognized that the reason for the settlements was to incorporate new resource frontiers, his department attempted to plan both town facilities and highways on a central place or urban hierarchical scheme. In practice it appears that the companies and the location of the resource such as coal or copper determined the location of the settlements, rather than the model suggested by the provincial government. Campbell's own riding for instance, was conceived as a region in which several new towns would be constructed, and new highway linkages built to connect communities.

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<sup>41</sup>D. South, Chief Planning Officer, Department of Municipal Affairs, British Columbia, 1965-62. Interview with the author, July 1974; and J.F. Gilmour, "The Forest Industry as a Determinant of Settlement in British Columbia, the case for integration through regional planning," M.S. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1965; E.J. Brown, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, British Columbia, 1965-72. Interview with the author, July 1974.

According to Campbell, a tightly controlled plan was necessary for development of the area as an industrial region. A commission was selected in 1964 to pick sites of future communities, suggest schools, secure reserves for campsites, establish zoning, and arrange for building of highways by industry and government.<sup>42</sup> Based on a central place model, each new settlement was to be fitted into an urban hierarchy in the region in which a level of services would be made available according to the rank position held by each settlement, and according to the distance between settlements of different rank positions in the hierarchy. However, in isolated resource frontier areas where few other settlements were present, the development of new towns met with difficulties because services were either poor or non-existent in some regions, and little or no transportation was available to enable towns to link together to share services. In addition, the existence of Tree Farm Licenses at widely dispersed points meant that urban centres could only be created at infrequent intervals.

In 1969 Campbell was asked by his Deputy Minister and by several Chambers of Commerce, to prevent the establishment of a new instant town in the central Highland Valley area at Logan Lake. The reason advanced was that it was too close to other settlements and would not fit their model of settlement layout in the region. Opposition to the new settlement was spearheaded by adjacent service centres (Cache Creek, Merritt, Ashcroft and Kamloops) primarily because the growth of a new town represented a threat to growth in their communities and a loss of potential population. Appellants to the minister:

... urged that existing services be used instead of creating a new township which would need ambulance, fire, garbage disposal, hospital and school services.  
... If the township were disallowed, established communities ... would greatly increase in population.<sup>43</sup>

In the plan suggested by the Department of Municipal Affairs, workers would have been required to commute from existing settlements

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<sup>42</sup>Victoria Daily Times, May 7, 1964, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup>Province, November 13, 1969, p. 17.

to the mine site. However, as E.J. Brown, the Deputy Minister, pointed out, the resource company was obligated to pay travelling time to workers, which meant that location by a central place model was less favoured by the mining company.<sup>44</sup> The new town was eventually constructed by the Lornex company at Logan Lake, some 20 miles from the mine site on a small arterial road, and thus principles of the central place model were disregarded.

Conflict and controversy over the location of service facilities such as schools and hospitals in Campbell's own riding on northern Vancouver Island raised questions in the communities about what functions should be allocated or permitted in each settlement. The government's attempts to allocate settlements in the province within a preconceived framework had not taken into consideration the role of the corporations in placing settlements where it was most convenient and profitable for them. While the Department of Municipal Affairs attempted to rationalize the spatial aspects of the resource frontier by emphasizing that workers should commute, and that planning of new settlements should consider "that housewives like to be in the largest communities they can get into because there are more choices of consumer products and social contacts," the resource companies, with the exception of the Lornex Company, continued to locate the settlements close to new industrial plants.<sup>45</sup> This was especially so in Northern Vancouver Island where attempts were made to allocate government functions and facilities in the region, based on a dispersed city hypothesis rather than a Central Place model. Even so, the inter-community rivalry over the allocation of functions in that area became focused on one central townsite, despite attempts to disperse those functions to several industrial towns in the region.<sup>46</sup>

Apart from the difficulties arising from inappropriate models of development, the government's plans for new settlements adjacent to

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<sup>44</sup>Brown, Interview, 1974.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>E.M.W. Gibson, Personal Communications, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, November 1976.

mines and mills proceeded apace in the 1960s. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, was cast in the role of new town maker, but it was the officers of his department who acted out the specialized role of government in the hinterland. As mentioned above, the planning for the settlements was completed in Vancouver and Calgary by government and resource corporations. Brown, the Deputy Minister, and South, the chief planning officer, conducted negotiations between government and the corporations. Negotiations consisted of discussions regarding the location of new settlements, the construction of access routes, the nature of the financial relationship, and the ownership status to be adopted by the corporation, the new settlement, and the 'new citizens' of each town.<sup>47</sup>

Campbell's department also developed specific requirements for each company to fulfill before development could be completed. These requirements were specified under a contract with the company and under Letters Patent for each new settlement. The contracts and Letters Patent were designed to regulate the new relationship between the corporations and the resources in the province.

The Assertion of Government and Corporate Control over New Hinterland and Resource Towns

The object of government policy was to promote an easy transition from company-owned towns to self-governed towns. In so doing, the Department of Municipal Affairs acted as a specialized agent and arm of government in facilitating the expansion and growth of a bureaucratic structure to support the new resource industries developed by the multinational corporations. Of the nine new towns developed, only MacKenzie and Granisle became the locus of more than a single enterprise (see Map I). This situation in which large corporations invested in resource extraction industries in dispersed locations was one which was ostensibly opposed in theory by the Social Credit government. In practice, it could do little to avoid it apart from attempting to prevent the development of too widely dispersed resource sites. Since the government policy of expansion aimed at promoting resource extraction in as many sites as possible, Campbell's department could only pay lip-service to the notion of multiple-

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<sup>47</sup>South, Interview, 1974; Brown, Interview, 1974.

enterprise communities and central place service towns. Thus the Municipal Affairs Department was reduced to writing regulations and to policing the internal mechanics of the new towns and, as mentioned above, to negotiating a financial status for each settlement.

The first instant town under the new regulations and controls was Port Alice which became incorporated on June 16th, 1965.<sup>48</sup> Under the new regulations, five residents were required to apply for municipal status to the provincial government. Section 10A of the Municipal Act outlined the action to be taken by government and by the corporations:

... where in the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, it is in the public interest to establish a municipality in conjunction with the development of a natural resource, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may, by letters patent, incorporate the residents of any area of unorganized territory into a municipality upon the receipt of a petition from at least five owners of land within the area proposed by the municipality.<sup>49</sup>

For the first five years of existence Port Alice and the other new towns built between 1965 and 1972 were governed by company nominees who became the municipal council. By exerting pressures and manipulating their nominees, each company was able to exert control over the growth and development of the new towns in the initial five years.

The high level of control exerted by the nominated councils, and the high costs of construction in isolated areas, also resulted in financial burden for each new town. The letters patent for each settlement gave specific instructions regarding the borrowing policy for each council. The letters patent of a number of councils had the normal 20 per cent limit on urban borrowing suspended at the discretion of the Minister for Municipal Affairs. The new town of Sparwood, for instance, had the 20 per cent of its assets limit on borrowing suspended by the Minister, which meant that with the concurrence of the Inspector of Municipalities (the Deputy Minister) the company dominated councils could borrow and spend amounts beyond the 20 per cent limit of assets. The

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<sup>48</sup> British Columbia, Municipal Statistics, 1970, p. 181.

<sup>49</sup> British Columbia, Municipal Act, R.S.B.C., 1920, pp. 179-182.



result of such policies was a high level of debenture indebtedness for the new resource towns compared to all other cities and villages in British Columbia up to 1971 (excluding Vancouver and Victoria) (see Table I).

Gold River on central Vancouver Island became the second instant town when it was granted a charter in August 1965 while still under construction. The five company employees who petitioned the government for municipal status became the first municipal council. Under the same legislation, petitioning for municipal status made available such services as municipal grants, federal works programmes, and other government support from bond issues and debentures.<sup>50</sup> In addition to this the right to obtain the services of a government commissioner could be granted should the resource extraction operation adjacent to the settlement cease functioning.<sup>51</sup> In Campbell's words, the aim of the legislation for the new settlements was to "... permit pay-as-you-go operation of the municipalities during the development period with all available funds being used to dress up the new communities."<sup>52</sup>

Although the Minister promoted the principle of self-financing for each settlement, the costs of construction were borne by the resource extraction companies. Land was first ceded to the companies, planners were then employed to design towns, contracts were let to build them, including all residential, service and commercial sectors, and homes were finally sold, leased or rented to workers.<sup>53</sup> Indeed the financing and operating of each settlement, apart from federal government loans, was almost entirely dependent on the resource company, a factor which firmly entrenched the control and ownership of the settlement in the hands of the company and its management. The extent to which the corporations

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<sup>50</sup>W.K. Smith, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, British Columbia, 1972, Letter to the author, August 31, 1972.

<sup>51</sup>Vancouver Province, April 21, 1965, n.p.

<sup>52</sup>Vancouver Sun, April 27, 1965, n.p.

<sup>53</sup>Lois Light, "Instant Utopia," Imperial Oil Review (June 1969), pp. 22-25; and Lois Light, "Anatomy of an Instant Town," B.C. Motorist (1971), p. 20.

Table I: MUNICIPAL DEBT, DEBT CHARGES, AND DEBENTURE INDEBTEDNESS,  
BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1972

	Date of Incorporation	Population 1972	Long Term Debt \$	Per Capita Long Term Debt \$	Annual Debt Charges \$	Per Capita Debt Charges \$	Total Debenture Debt \$	Per Capita (d) Debenture Debt \$
Fraser Lake	1966(b)	1,292	108,880	84.27	49,710	38.47	277,176	214.53
Tahsis	1970(b)	1,351	8,940	6.61	11,125	8.23	333,940	247.17
Gold River	1965(a)	1,896	981,297	517.56	88,240	46.54	1,552,297	818.72
Sparwood	1966(a)	2,990	749,643	250.77	70,967	23.73	635,818	212.64
Mackenzie	1966(a)	2,332	849,757	364.19	94,612	40.57	2,180,973	935.23
Port Hardy	1966(b)	1,953	274,573	140.59	29,806	15.26	1,437,649	736.12
Port Alice	1965(a)	1,507	632,515	419.71	82,596	54.80	1,083,000	718.64
Kitimat	1953(a)	11,803	4,551,207	385.59	777,144	67.59	5,228,207	442.95
Hudson's Hope	1965(a)	1,741	93,494	53.70	13,772	7.91	235,684	135.37
Granisle	1971(a)	973	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd	nd
Houston	1957(b)	2,239	311,158	138.97	65,349	29.18	1,246,799	556.85
Trail	1907(c)	11,149	939,953	84.30	168,248	15.09	1,618,809	145.19
Logan Lake	1970(a)	nd	nd	nd	23,059	nd	nd	nd
Dawson Creek	1936(c)	11,885	1,387,437	116.73	266,590	22.43	2,028,437	170.67
Fort St. John	1947(c)	8,264	1,783,663	215.83	283,935	34.35	3,662,253	443.15
Fort Nelson	1971(c)	2,289	263,455	115.09	28,543	12.46	1,034,496	451.94
Gt. Vancouver	1886	1,021,794	240,203,908	235.08	4,561,897	4.46	160,021,748	156.60
Cities (other)	nd	435,464	62,372,883	143.23	nd	nd	108,030,883	248.08
Districts(e)	nd	808,215	124,807,452	154.42	nd	nd	199,409,023	246.72
Towns (c)	nd	59,325	7,933,565	133.73	nd	nd	18,658,778	314.51
Villages (c)	nd	62,917	7,035,786	111.82	nd	nd	14,996,681	238.35

Notes: nd = no data; (a) Instant Towns constructed by resource companies (Kitimat is included in this category here even though it was not an Instant Town); (b) Older settlements granted Instant Town status; (c) Older resource based settlements included for simple comparative purposes; (d) N.B. The average per capita debenture debt for Instant Towns in 1970 was \$542.53 whereas the debt for all others (e) was \$261.91, a difference of \$280.62 or 107%.

Sources: Table compiled from British Columbia, Department of Municipal Affairs Annual Report, 1973, p. z.28; and British Columbia, Department of Municipal Affairs, Statistics Relating to Regional and Municipal Governments in British Columbia, Victoria, B.C., June 1973.

retained their financial investments in the settlements reinforced the control which, although modified from ownership pattern of the company towns, was nonetheless an effective expression of metropolitan dominance. Furthermore, the extent to which the instant towns were single-company operations in resource extraction industries which were subject to international financial and marketing conditions and changes, meant that the attempts to effect local government control under the Bennett government were effectively undermined.<sup>54</sup>

The provincial government declared in 1963 and 1964 that the control of new resource towns and their local government powers should be decentralized from the provincial government and the corporations and "be handed over to local councils."<sup>55</sup> Brown, the Deputy Minister responsible for the enactment of Campbell's policy in the new settlements, declared that the British Columbia philosophy of decentralization of authority was created to formulate a minimum of interference in local affairs. The legislation, he suggested, involved less interference in British Columbia's new resource towns than that which existed under other provincial law in Canada.<sup>56</sup>

Between 1952 and 1972 several other provinces instituted legislation similar to British Columbia's. The province of Quebec, for instance, had both a Mining Village Act and a Mining Towns Act.<sup>57</sup> The province of Manitoba had a Local Government Districts Act which it applied to several single-enterprise communities, and in the province of Alberta the establishment of a new town by Order-in-Council was spelled out by a New Towns Act, as were the mechanisms for organizing local government

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<sup>54</sup>N.R. Crump, Final Report - Grande Cache Commission, Alberta, 1973.

<sup>55</sup>Brown, Interview, 1974.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>A.O. Dufresne, "Significance of Mining in the Province of Quebec," Canadian Geographical Journal, Vol. LX (June 1960), p. 201.

and financing the development of new settlements.<sup>58</sup> Local government districts in these above cases were controlled by a resident administrator appointed by the province and not, as in the case of British Columbia, by a local municipal council.<sup>59</sup>

In the province of Ontario the Municipal Act related to the incorporation of Improvement Districts was applied to several company towns in the 1960s. Similar legislation in Newfoundland under the Local Government Act made for similar provisions, and several ordinances passed by the North West Territories' council enabled the creation of local administrative districts.<sup>60</sup> By comparison the British Columbia government insisted on what it termed true ownership communities with proper local government. Campbell argued that if there was a significant industrial development, and if there were significant numbers of people in an industrial settlement, the principle of the right to vote should be granted on the basis of the ownership of property in the townsite. He thus negated any possibility of granting a franchise to tenant electors, which would have been possible under the old company town system, without requiring workers to purchase property and become taxpayers supporting a corporate industrial settlement.

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<sup>58</sup>Noel Dant, "New Towns in Alberta," Paper presented at EIC Northern Development Conference, Regina, Sask., November 26-27, 1968, p. 5; Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs, Town and Rural Planning Branch, Proceedings of the 1956 Conference of Canadian Provincial Planning Officials, Edmonton, Alberta, Part 1, January 1957, pp. 80-97.

<sup>59</sup>Manitoba, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Letter to the writer dated February 21, 1973; Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 4th Session, 29th legislature, April 12, 1972; Manitoba, Local Government Districts Act, R.S.M., c. 148, S1, An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Local Government Districts in Unorganized Territory and Disorganized Municipalities in Manitoba, Queen's Printer, Winnipeg, 1969, pp. 1-20.

<sup>60</sup>Walker, Single Enterprise Communities, p. 55; Saskatchewan, Municipal Affairs, Regina, Letter to the author, February 27, 1973; Saskatchewan, An Act to Amend the Industrial Towns Act 1968, Regina, March 29, 1968, Queen's Printer, Regina; New Brunswick, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Fredericton, Letter to the author, March 14, 1973; Newfoundland and Labrador, Minister of Municipal Affairs, St. John's, Letter to the author, March 14, 1973.

By means of the new settlements legislation of the Instant Towns Act of 1965, the transfer of ownership of the settlements from companies to citizens was ensured.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, this transfer of responsibility was meant to have certain social and political effects in the new communities. Campbell assumed that the transference of control would promote more equitable relationships between management and workers. The companies also wanted to encourage more families to move to and stay in the new towns, and by granting the opportunity to own a house they assumed workers would be attracted.<sup>62</sup> They also argued that given the responsibility of ownership and by becoming absorbed in maintaining the equity of their private property, workers would become less transient and less militant.

One company official from the Tahsis Corporation at the new town of Gold River stated that "... we are subsidizing the bunkhouse (in the old company towns) to the tune of \$200,000 per year--we would rather pay taxes too."<sup>63</sup> However, in many instances the industrial plants adjacent to the new settlements built between 1964 and 1972 were not included in the area of the municipality and hence were not required to pay municipal taxes to the local townsite. Instead their taxes were paid directly to the provincial government and local settlements lost control over the dispersement of their tax base. This had the effect of increasing the tax burden of settlements and increasing the municipal and household indebtedness of the residents. The new Instant Towns legislation thus contained several contradictions which enabled the transfer of costs of an urban infrastructure from the corporations to the workforce under the guise of creating more equitable relationships between management and workers, and of creating more attractive townsites.

Prior to the 1965 legislation, companies rented houses at very cheap rates to workers who were both the tenants and employees of the

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<sup>61</sup>Campbell, Interview, 1973.

<sup>62</sup>South, Interview, 1974.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

company. Following the disbanding of company towns, many workers, in the words of South, the provincial government planning officer, "... became straddled with a mortgage." Thus the costs of providing the physical infrastructure of the industry, in the form of housing, became a function of the workforce rather than of the owners of the industrial plants. This contradiction was rationalized by the companies in a question raised at the initial meetings between the resource companies and the provincial government. The question was "Are we going to have a contented labour force in a suburban type of community in the bush in which workers can own their own homes, or is the answer in the rough and ready camp life of the old company towns?"<sup>64</sup> The answer given was the former. The solution was to remove the company towns and replace them with what Campbell later called neon light suburbs in the bush.

The cooperation between the government and corporations to change the nature of the resource settlements, was partly based on Campbell's perception of the shack towns, shanty towns, untidy urban areas, and uninhibited squatter areas in the resource frontier areas of the province. However his particular perception of the company towns was influenced by the pressure from the companies to get rid of the old company towns. General policy supporting the move had, for instance, been put forward by Robinson in 1962 and by Walker in 1952.<sup>65</sup> The minister was also familiar with reports prepared for the Natural Resources Conferences in the province convened by his government since the mid-1950s. A report from the 1958 conference, for instance, stated that:

Frontier areas ... attract, among others, the restless and dissatisfied elements who have become impatient with the conservative norms and the economic social inequalities of older and more settled regions. They are attracted by the newness and rawness of the area-- the absence of established customs, vested interests, and long-standing regulations. They feel that in these new areas, they can make their own way, carving out a

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ira M. Robinson, New Industrial Towns in Canada's Resource Frontier, Department of Geography, Research Paper #73 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962).

new life as they see it, without too many restrictions.<sup>66</sup>

### Conclusion

Pressman and Lauder argued in 1978 that government involvement in resource town developments in Canada has been minimal until recently. It is clear from this study that the province of British Columbia had a great deal of carefully planned input into the new resource towns developed between 1965 and 1972. Indeed, planning by the department of municipal affairs, both at the regional and settlement level, suggests that government involvement at an early stage in the 1960s was an integral part of the restructuring of resource extractive industries in British Columbia in this period. This form of infrastructure planning and the integration of a new settlements policy to suit the needs of the changing structure of capital reflects a rising level of state intervention generally in the economy of British Columbia, in other Canadian provinces, and indeed in most other western capitalist societies in recent years.

By providing a constitutional framework for bringing about changes, the provincial government was convinced that what it was doing was in the interests of both industry and the workforce. Thus the extension of provincial controls in the resource hinterlands could be rationalized as a cleaning-up process and an adoption of regulating and controlling devices. Campbell and the corporations were also aware of what they understood to be restless and dissatisfied workers in the frontier regions. Home ownership and citizen control of the local government were designed to minimize such elements. However, dissatisfaction and employer-employee relationships are not always responsive to mere alterations in the physical living environment, nor in the ownership of property and housing in isolated single enterprise communities.

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<sup>66</sup>S. Jamieson, "The Labour Force: Cultural Factors Affecting Industrial Relations in British Columbia," a paper read before the British Columbia Natural Resources Conference, Victoria, British Columbia, February 1958 (mimeo), pp. 2-3.