

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BULKLEY VALLEY

HOUSTON

SMITHERS

HAZELTON

Strung together with the thread of the Bulkley River, the communities of Houston, Smithers, and Hazelton share little more in common than their geographical proximity and a bit of early history. Although the three communities are commonly lumped together in the designation "the Bulkley Valley", the valley itself changes dramatically from one end of its 100 or so miles to the other. There are also social and economic differences, each community having a distinctive "flavour" and its own "community ethic". This ethic is, in essence, an implicit set of rules and guidelines that inform both insiders and outsiders about how things are done in that community. Insiders act in accord with the ethic without thinking much about it, but they can and do readily and clearly articulate it to outsiders when asked.

Physical Characteristics

Since settlement and subsequent developments in the Bulkley Valley relate to the physical features of the area, it is worth briefly delineating these features for further reference. To describe the Bulkley Valley in order of settlement, one must start from the west and go east. But to describe it by landfall, the Bulkley Valley begins in the east. A high, central plateau grows gradually more rolling as it extends west of Prince George. East of Houston, this Nechako Plateau ends in a watershed, west of which rivers and streams flow more to the sea rather than into the Fraser River. As the plateau ends, the surrounding landscape becomes increasingly rugged. Just west of Houston, the larger Morice

River is joined by a smaller stream, to produce the river known to the Indians as Watsonquah. An early surveyor who did not check the actual confluence of these two streams gave the name of the smaller tributary which he had named the Bulkley to the resultant river. The name is a dubious, perhaps portentous, commemoration of Colonel Charles S. Bulkley, a former Union Army officer in the American Civil War. Colonel Bulkley was the engineer-in-chief for a telegraph construction project that slashed its way through the area in the 1860's.

At Houston, the mountains of the Babine, Telkwa and Howson ranges are relatively distant to the north, and the valley is wide, rolling, and as elsewhere in this northern region, forested heavily. Beyond Houston, the Bulkley River begins a long, northern detour to find a route through the mountains. At Smithers, the valley is narrower, roughly 5 miles wide. In this part of the valley, there are some natural open and grass lands, but the forested hills rise more quickly towards the Hudson's Bay massif to the west and the Babine range to the east. Then the river suddenly narrows and churns down through a gorge at Moricetown. From here to the point west of Hazelton where the Bulkley flows into the Skeena, the valley becomes increasingly narrow and rugged, the river banks rising nearly vertically for hundreds of feet in some places. This part of the valley is little more than a terraced trough gouged through the mountains. Still bounded by the Babine range to the east, at Hazelton the Rocher de Boule massif marks the most northern point around which the Bulkley-Skeena system must flow. After its confluence with the Bulkley below Haguilget Canyon, the Skeena River then makes its way more directly west to the sea, which it finds just south of Prince Rupert.

Climate, as one moves from east to west, becomes more temperate. Early real estate promoters and speculators in search of gullible settlers claimed that the Bulkley Valley

was warmed in winter by Chinook winds blowing in from the coast:

These balmy, moisture-laden breezes bring an abundance of rain for the maturing of crops and completely do away with the severe winter weather found in this latitude in other portions of the world . . . the temperate, well-balanced climate insure(s) quick growth, while crop failure, woefully common in less favoured sections of the North American Continent, is unknown here. (Bulkley Valley Historical and Museum Society, 1914.)

Unfortunately, the Bulkley Valley is not quite such a paradise. There is more moisture and less severe cold at the Hazelton end than the Houston end of the valley, but there is more good land for crops at the Houston end than the Hazelton end. Around Smithers, a median seems to be achieved between moisture and arable land, making it the most agriculturally developed part of the valley as well as the most scenic. History

Prior to White settlement, the Bulkley Valley region was home to two distinctly different Native groups. The Carrier Indians are part of the Dene Nation and their language and culture are Athabascan. Although they are sometimes described as nomadic in their pre-contact culture, the Carriers did, in fact, establish more or less permanent seasonal village sites, two are in the Bulkley Valley, one near the gorge now known as Moricetown Falls, and one high on the cliffs of the Hagwilget Canyon just above Hazelton. To the west of Hagwilget Canyon have traditionally lived the Gitksan Indians who, along with the Nishga, are culturally related to the larger coastal Tsimpsian group. The Gitksans lived in a number of village sites along the Skeena River and some of its tributaries, such as the Kispiox River. The Gitksans were also travellers, and their highway between the coast and the interior villages was the Skeena. Although the Gitksans in the village of Gitanmaax and the Carriers a few miles away above Hagwilget Canyon appear to have had little to do with

each other, there must have been some interaction. It is known, for instance, that the interior groups annually travelled up to 150 miles over a mountainous trail (unflatteringly called the Grease Trail by early Whites) to the Naas Valley to catch the oily oolican fish used for trade as well as food and light. During the fish run, according to early accounts, there was much socializing among the various Indian groups as well as trading. Culturally, however, the Carriers and the Gitksans remained separate and distinct, despite their geographical proximity. Only in recent years have the two groups joined resources in order to promote their mutual political, economic and social well-being.

Although the odd white explorer, trapper or adventurer made his way through the valley from east to west, the main settlement thus came from the west. According to one amateur historian of the region, settlement on the coast and up the Skeena followed a different pattern to that of development in the rest of the country:

The usual sequence of the entrance of explorers, followed by exploiters, then settlers, and finally the church, was in the main reversed. Except for the explorers who journeyed along the fringes of the territory . . . and the men in isolated trading posts at Fort Simpson and the central interior, the first white settlers in most of the Skeena area were the emissaries of the Church.

(F. Geddes Large, 1957:18.)

However, development of the Bulkley Valley seems to have followed the more usual sequence. If lofty spiritual aim guided the missionary settlements on the coast, more material gains motivated the settlement of the interior areas. The year 1866 saw two such impacts: the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post at Hagwilget, and the Collins Overland Telegraph Trail came in from the east. Although the Hudson's Bay Company's post folded two years later, it was re-established in 1880 at its present site in Hazelton.

In between, the principles of the fur trade were well-established and carried on by more indirect commerce, i.e., the Gitksans served as trading intermediaries between the interior villages and the coastal trading posts.

The more significant of these two impacts, as it turned out, was not the Hudson's Bay Company post at Hagwilget, but the Collins Overland Telegraph Trail. This project was sponsored by the Western Union Company and was entrepreneured by a man named Collins. The aim was to link the U.S. telegraph line with Europe and Asia via a line built north from San Francisco to Alaska, over the Bering Straits to Russia. At the same time this project was being conceived and carried out, however, there were a series of efforts, unsuccessful at first, to lay a telegraph cable across the Atlantic Ocean. The trans-Atlantic effort was finally successful in 1866, after which work on the Collins Overland Telegraph Trail ceased. By the time work stopped, a trail 12 to 15 feet wide had been cut and cable laid north of the border up the Cariboo Trail to Quesnel, then west and north to Fraser Lake, through the Bulkley Valley to Hazelton, and north up the Kispiox Valley about 40 miles beyond Hazelton. When work on the trail stopped, some of the crew subsequently settled in areas they had been working in, principally around Hazelton.

This, then, was the beginning of Hazelton and the first real white settlement in the Bulkley Valley. The settlement around Hazelton gained additional life from a gold rush on the Omineca River in 1870-72. To service these gold seekers as well as the settled remnants of the telegraph crew, two stores were built in Hazelton. The town of Hazelton at that time boasted six buildings and one tent.

The next spell of notable activity in the area occurred in the 1890's. The Provincial government foreseeing, they hoped, massive development of these northern regions sent in survey crews to map and inventory the resources in 1890-92.

Symbolically, these surveyors systematically changed the names used by the local inhabitants, mainly Natives, for the rivers, lakes and mountains and re-named them after various representatives of encroaching "civilization". Watsonquah River became the Bulkley; Stegawdon Mountain became Rocher de Boule; Gitanmaax became Hazelton; Tye Lake became Aldermere Lake and even later McLure Lake; Two Bridge Creek became Reisetter; and so on. Some of the new names stuck, but some -- such as Tye Lake and Two Bridge Creek -- are still used by the local residents despite the official designations on maps and road signs.

In 1898 the Klondike gold rush precipitated a new interest in establishing a telegraph line to Alaska, and work was begun a year later. Two construction crews began at either end and worked towards each other, finding themselves embarrassingly separated by 40 miles in parallel valleys towards the middle. To service this line, line cabins built every 20 to 30 miles housed an operator and a linesman who also acted as mail carrier in his maintenance travels up and down the line.

The 1890's were probably the golden era for Hazelton. The Hudson's Bay Company having re-established a post at Hazelton in 1880, the community flourished with the fur trade and the steady stream of itinerate prospectors and explorers passing through on their way to somewhere else. Initially, the Hudson's Bay Company brought its merchandise up the Skeena in dugouts piloted by Natives, but the Company balked at paying \$60 per ton for this service and in 1891 a steam-driven paddle-wheeler was brought in to take over the run. In turn, the Company then charged all passengers and other shippers an outrageous sum for the privilege of using their steamer.

Descriptions of the trip up the Skeena from Port Essington on the coast indicate that it was a spectacular as well as exciting trip. With its shallows, canyons, and fast water

sections, the river was only barely navigable in anything other than a dugout canoe. In places, the ship had to be tortuously lined up against the current; in other spots, the passengers were put ashore for dangerous stretches, such as shallows and sandbars when the paddlewheel hurled a barrage of rocks in all directions as the ship ground over them. Having made this trip in 1897, an American anthropologist in search of "interesting primitives" described the town of Hazelton as he saw it then:

The town occupies a low, uneven plain which, beginning at the water's edge, extends back for a quarter of a mile, where it is hemmed in by a high bluff on the face of the second river terrace. There are but few of the old houses left and still fewer totem poles, and they are without particular interest. Most prominent in the village is the war-like stockade of the company's [Hudson's Bay] post, with its two bastions at opposite corners, and the blockhouse in the centre of the inclosure, but now hidden by the store which stands in front of it. The stockade was put up in 1891 when an Indian uprising was feared throughout the length of the river. (George A. Dorsey, 1897:187.)

By 1900, there was much anticipation among residents of the valley and even more in the metropoli outside that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway would be built through the area. In greedy expectation of this event, speculators came in anxious hordes to buy land, thus immediately driving prices up. There were already some homesteaders scattered in the middle and eastern ends of the valley by then. Some of these settlers were left-overs from the second telegraph installation crew; some were prospectors who had given up the search for minerals and had turned to farming instead; others came to the valley having read or heard some of the flagrantly inaccurate claims of the speculators. It was generally believed, both within and without the valley, that all that was now needed to create a boom was the arrival of the railroad. The burning issue of the day was the question of where the divisional point would be, for it was well known that one would be established somewhere in the Bulkley Valley. By 1910, most

of the tiny settlements in the valley were desperately hoping and scheming to become the site for the chosen location which was expected to boom into a central supply and service centre.

Not all the communities sought this boom, however. In Aldermere, which sat beside Aldermere Lake (Tyee) on a ridge above the river and Telkwa, the local Board of Trade, summoned local citizens to a meeting in January, 1913 for the purpose of:

. . . arousing the sentiment of the community to the proposed invasion of a ruthless operation, the Grand Trunk Pacific, who intend to desecrate the classic groves of Aldermere with a barbarous roundhouse, a malevolent divisional point and a division headquarters for the accommodation of a bunch of greasy roughnecks [As a result of the meeting it was] resolved, that the Board of Trade of Aldermere pledges itself to resist to the utmost the attempt on the part of the Grand Trunk Pacific to thrust a station down our throats with its accompanying horde of shacks and cons.
(J. Tupper Saywell, 1951:93.)

It is indeed noteworthy that right from the beginning, a significant number of settlers in the valley foresaw, however melodramatically, that the impacts brought by "progress" and "economic development" were not all positive, and they set themselves the task of organizing a collective opposition to these impacts. In the case of the railroad, it wasn't the opposition of the Board of Trade that caused the divisional point to be established elsewhere, but rather the fact that speculators had driven up land prices in every community that was a possible choice. In consequence, the Grand Trunk Pacific looked for a tract of cheap, unalienated land to buy.

They found what they were looking for almost exactly half way between Houston and Hazelton at the foot of Hudson's Bay Mountain.

In June, 1913, a flat swamp was surveyed and the town

of Smithers became the first instant town in the north. One year later, Smithers had bowling alleys, churches, both a doctor and a dentist, two pool rooms, a real estate firm, meat market, sign works, three cafes, drug store, bank, and assorted other retail businesses. Many of these establishments carried on trade from tents while their buildings were being constructed. In January of 1914, just one year after the first survey stake was driven, electric lights were turned on in the town and a school had been established; in February, local citizens wore red lapel buttons exuberantly predicting "5000 Population by 1915".

The citizens of Smithers were nothing if not enthusiastic and energetic, and from its origins Smithers was a town of committees. In that first year there was a committee to establish a school, a committee to name the streets, a committee to set up a hockey team and build an ice rink, a committee to arrange social and cultural events, and so on. Whenever a crisis developed or an important decision about the shape and destiny of the community had to be made, a meeting was called and all the residents attended to talk the problem over in true townhall democracy fashion. Right from the start, Smithers was thus the social as well as the economic centre for the valley. Houston, though on the line, failed to flourish; Aldermere disappeared, along with many other infant communities; Telkwa diminished in size, though not community spirit; and Hazelton was by-passed completely. The topography which had been the *raison d'etre* for Hazelton when the river was the main mode of transportation, became the cause of its decline when the railroad took over. In order for the railroad to have gone through Hazelton, it would have had to cross both the Bulkley and the Skeena, and this was an engineering feat not deemed feasible in view of the fact that a flatter and easier route existed several miles to the south of the village. The old residents of Hazelton refused to move to accommodate the railroad, so two new communities sprang up along the line and were pragmatically named New Town and South Town. The

friction and rivalry between these three Hazeltons continues to this day.

By the 1920's, Smithers was firmly established as the supply centre for the region, having totally supplanted Hazelton. The completion of a road between New Hazelton and Prince George in 1925 made travel east possible, but the highway also by-passed Old Hazelton by following the railroad tracks. The "logical" thing for the residents of Hazelton to have done would have been to move themselves over to New or South Town. That this didn't occur may reflect the extent to which Old Hazelton was in certain respects a "company town". Community affairs were monitored and controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company factor, as was the case in all the Hudson's Bay Company posts in the northern hinterland. Then that role seems to have been taken over by a few families, one of which owned the store, hotel, and the electric light plant. Attempts by the same family to establish stores in Houston, Telkwa and Smithers were short-lived, and they retreated to Hazelton to reign in small and isolated paternalism. Today, members of the family still wield influence, though their domination over local affairs is being increasingly contested by other groups.

Though Houston was on both the railroad and the highway, somehow it failed to develop, probably because Smithers had developed so fast and so extensively that it didn't leave much room for competition. In 1927, Houston's business district consisted of one store, one hotel, one school, no churches, and the post office was in the home of the post-mistress. Most residents in the area lived comfortably, though not splendidly, on stump-ranches outside the village. In summer they farmed, and in winter they cut poles and railroad ties in the forests, an effort that also helped clear land for later agricultural use. Until recent years, the complementary occupations of farming and forestry formed the foundation of an essentially rural community around Houston. In the last ten years, however, several large

industrial operations have located in or near Houston, and the village has suffered many agonies of impact in adjusting from a rural to an industrial ethic. Long-time residents describe the by-gone Houston in warm terms, recalling the fun of social events and the security of everyone knowing everyone and always ready to help in times of need. Hurt and confusion and sometimes disgust cross their faces when they speak of Houston now and its struggles to remain a community - "It's just another company town", said one.

General Overview

In the standard economics accounting of cash flow, the economy of the Bulkley Valley is dominated by forestry and mining; service and tourism rank third and fourth, and agriculture a lagging fifth. If economic accounting were done on the basis of stability rather than dollars and cents, that ordering might be reversed. It is a curious observation that mining has always been expected to provide the big bonanza while forestry provided whatever disposable income people had, and agriculture put bread and butter on the table. In summarizing the relative prosperity of the 1920's, one writer stated the general case for the area:

In the Bulkley Valley thousands of dollars were invested into the valley's mines. Each week the Interior News carried reports of new investigations, new developments, immense financial transactions concerning the Duthie, Cronin, Topley and Glacier Gulch mines. Although mining always took the spotlight, the industry which, although less spectacular, did far more for the valley was lumbering. Tie cutting, pole cutting, and manufacturing lumber for internal and external trade provided employment for an ever-increasing number of men, while many farmers found winter work in the great camps . . . Hundreds of carloads of lumber and poles were shipped out each year, almost unnoticed amid the great excitement of new mineral fields. As always, however, farming and ranching were the staple valley industries.
(J. Tupper Saywell, 1951:128.)

While mining may not have been, in the final analysis, the biggest economic factor in terms of total dollars for employment incomes, it has provided a very important component of the overall picture. Two major processes seem to explain this situation. At a broad level of analysis, mining, perhaps more than any other industry, is critically shaped by supply and demand economic conditions in the world market and the related stock market manipulations of promoters. More specific to the north west region is the geological nature of the predominant ore bodies that makes large-scale mining profitable only when market demand is high enough to off-set the high costs of extraction and transportation. At various times in the past, relatively large mines such as the Cronin Babine to the north east of town and the Sil-Van, Coronado, and Glacier Gulch mines on Hudson's Bay Mountain, have operated for as short a period as one year, to as long as thirty-five years, closing when market prices for the copper and silver in them fell too low to make their extraction profitable enough, and re-opening when world prices rose again. The closing of a mine has all too frequently been experienced locally as an apparently instantaneous decision made without prior warning, and for this reason, mining on a large scale, while it has provided some bonanzas, has not provided stable employment.

Since large-scale economic considerations have not, as a general rule, favoured large-scale mining operations, independent and individual prospecting and extraction have had persisting importance. A coal mine at Telkwa, locally owned and operated on a very small scale, is a notable example of this general rule. The virtue of this scale seems to be that it is a more effective utilization of both human and mineral resources. Individually controlled operations can extract ore from small deposits in a manner that is not profitable for large companies but which provides an acceptable income level for the individuals involved. Such local control also permits more flexible responses to market conditions without causing major employment problems, for the

individual miner-operators can combine mining with other work. An important aspect, too, of such small-scale operations are their contributions to the quality of life, both in terms of individuals and in terms of the community. While small independent operations are certainly affected by world conditions, they also provide a measure of individual control that is not enjoyed by employees of a large, metropolis owned and controlled operation. Equally important is the fact that one's membership in the community is not disrupted and that these individuals can continue to contribute to community activities and processes.

As might be expected, the economic viability of the region has fluctuated in concert with world events and conditions and with changes in policies affecting the resource industries. The valley, along with the rest of the western world, rode a wave of prosperity in the 1920's, pulled in its belt and struggled to survive during the '30's, and expanded again with war and post-war demand for raw materials. The most affected by this larger cycle was Houston with its emphasis on forestry and agriculture, and the least affected was Smithers with its much more diversified economy spread between natural resources, agriculture, and service and supply. Around Hazelton, the largely Native population suffered the fate of most reservation groups and was relegated to the role of unemployed, unemployable welfare dependents.

HOUSTON

The boom-or-bust cycle is probably an inevitable concomitant of resource-based economies, and the case of Houston is poignantly illustrative of this cycle. The first "industry", if one could call it that, in Pleasant Valley, as the area around Houston was then called, was engendered by the installation of the telegraph line around the turn of the century. During and after the line was built, the **construction** crew, operators and linesmen all had to be supplied with food and equipment. Pack trains were run by the government to transport

and distribute these supplies. The horses used in the pack trains also needed some servicing, and a ranch was established to grow hay for feed and as a place to winter the horses. By 1907, this Diamond Ranch covered several thousand acres and employed 15 men. Other early settlers also worked to build up similar ranches. In 1912, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad was pushed through Pleasant Valley, construction being done by crews of about 100 men who lived in campsites that were moved as sections of the railroad were completed. One of these campsites was in Houston, and to accommodate the construction workers and others following the railroad (especially land speculators), hotel and other facilities were set up. But then the divisional point was put in Smithers rather than Houston, and after the construction crews were gone, the need for service facilities vanished, too. Having made an initial move to develop a large business element in the village, the community then reverted to being a small social and shopping centre for the farmers and ranchers and their families.

The 1920's and '30's saw most Houston area residents engaged in the dual occupations of summer farming and winter tie cutting. There were some attempts to live solely on the land, with dairying and the raising of timothy hay seed being the most viable. As long as there was a creamery in Telkwa, dairying was quite viable, but gradually the little dairies up and down the line between Prince George and Prince Rupert were bought out by larger companies and collection and processing facilities were consolidated in fewer locations. The advent of the Milk Marketing Board established quotas and other policies that gradually squeezed out small producers, too. Although dairying is still carried on in the Houston to Hazelton area, it is mostly done as single family operations with the milk being shipped now to Kitimat for processing in a plant owned by Dairyland (head office: Vancouver).

The raising of timothy seed suffered something of the same fate. Initially, this was a fairly profitable venture for the Houston farmers. Then, the market dropped and problems with weed contamination in the fields made the growing of timothy seed unprofitable. The same is true of the growing of spinach and turnip seed during World War Two. Prior to the war, several European countries had dominated this market, but with war in their backfields, such agricultural enterprise was impossible. Thus, during the war Houston farmers found a big and ready market for their spinach and turnip seed, and a seed processing plant in Telkwa also cashed in on this small boom. A new variety of cabbage -- Houston Evergreen -- was even developed for northern areas. But when the war was over, the European countries that had traditionally controlled this market were able to get back in to production, and Houston was squeezed out again.

Beef ranching has also always provided some income for farmers in the area, although costs are high because the main markets are some distance away in Vancouver and Edmonton. At present, the raising of beef constitutes the bulk of agricultural ventures. Though it provides a satisfying lifestyle, most of the ranchers must subsidize their operations with income obtained from outside sources or work. The most "comfortable" farmers or ranchers now are those who inherited their land from fathers and grandfathers who homesteaded.

Although lumbering has so far provided the bulk of incomes in the Houston area, the forestry industry has undergone the same kind of dynamic as the dairy industry -- i.e., small operations have been squeezed out by big business. Farmers in the valley supplemented their incomes with cutting ties for the railroad in the winter in the '20's and '30's, but the the '40's and '50's lumbering had become a fairly full-time occupation for many. One old-time Houston resident recalls that:

In the early 1950's anyone had the right to acquire timber by simply picking your location and making application to the B.C. Forest Service. The timber was then advertised for auction, but competition was almost non-existent due to the simple threat that if you bid up on another's application you were exposed to retaliation when your turn came to apply for more. . . . By the late '50's and early '60's almost every second person one met in Houston either owned and operated a small sawmill or had his own timber sale of Crown timber. More than 60 operations clustered around Houston, and "Slab City" was at its peak! (Houston Centennial Committee, 1971:105, 100.)

Slab City's peak was of short duration, however. In 1958 there were 67 sawmills operating around Houston; ten years later in 1968 there were only 5 sawmills still operating. The decline was caused by a change in policy by the B.C. Forest Service. Prior to 1958, as the previous quotation recounts, anyone could bid for a timber sale, and as a result many individuals operated small, portable sawmills. After 1958, B.C. Forest Service established a policy of sustained or perpetual yield which meant no more timber could be cut in a year than could theoretically be renewed in the same year. The forest reserves were divided into Public Sustained Yield Units (PSYU'S) and each was assessed in terms of the annual allowable cut that would be permitted in it. Sawmills were then put on strict quotas of allowable cut, and the only way to increase a quota was to buy out another mill. The smaller mills were then swallowed up by the larger ones in a series of successive gulps so that by 1968 only 5 rather large sawmills still operated. The small, independent operators displaced in this process were not necessarily absorbed as employees in the larger operations, for technological advances had replaced the more labour intensive methods with more capital intensive, partially automated equipment.

While the change in B.C. Forest Service's policy was, no doubt, partly motivated by some concern for conservation of the resources, a more important reason was the general economic belief that "the bigger the better" when it came to industrial

matters, i.e., that big operations were "more economical" than smaller ones. Given this general rationale, it seems likely (though hard to prove definitively) that the B.C. Forest Service encouraged an even further consolidation of sawmills. In any event, a series of rather fortuitous (and lucrative for a few) developments occurred in the middle '60's. A group of local lumbermen formed a company called the Bulkley Valley Pulp and Timber Ltd; this company then gained the rights to 9,400 square miles of Crown land at the headwaters of the Skeena and proposed to build a pulpmill to utilize this timber. Two big companies, Consolidated Bathurst and Bowater Paper Corporation were invited to form Bulkley Valley Pulp and Timber, and grandiose plans were drawn up to build in Houston not only a pulp mill, but also a saw and planer mill and a veneer plant. This was to be the big bonanza for Houston, and the population by 1975 was projected to grow to at least 7,000. But Bowater and Bathurst (who came to be called Buliwater and Bathtub by disgruntled locals) ran into serious management and financial troubles and pulled out. Of the Grand Plan, only the kiln dried lumber mill was realized. It was subsequently bought by Northwood Pulp Industries and boasted of being "the largest kiln dried lumber mill under one roof in the world". (See Table 15 for statistics on the lumbering industry.)

At present, there are two lumber mills operating in Houston, the one owned by Northwood and a smaller one owned by Weldwood. There are still occasional rumours that a pulp mill and/or a veneer plant will yet be built in or near Houston, but these developments seem unlikely. Not only do the timber reserves not support such expensive and large operations, but there is also growing undercurrent in government policy that "small is beautiful".

In his 1974 report to the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District Board, the planning director for the region summed up this budding philosophy:

In planning any new resource development in the Region the major goal should be towards serving the people now situated within the Region. The old concept of planning a resource development for the sake of exploiting the resource or solely for the purpose of making a profit will only lead to more social problems and personnel instability as has happened by this sort of planning in the past. (Wm. W. Gilgan, 1974.)

Nevertheless, the report goes on to predict that Houston will experience the biggest development and hence population growth in the region in the future. At the same time, the report recommends a greater diversification of the economy to enable more people to combine, as they did in the old days, such seasonal occupations as farming and lumbering.

While the economic base in Houston may rest solidly on the forest industry, mining is increasingly being seen as the next big development. Like agriculture and lumbering, mining has always been around in the Houston area and has suffered ups and downs as ore bodies are developed and then depleted and markets rise and fall in tune with the world-wide harmony created in the offices of stock promoters and buyers.

The main mineral deposits found in the valley as a whole are gold, silver, copper, and coal. The mountains around the valley are full of little "googy holes" that have been laboriously excavated by prospectors. In the general Houston area, five mines have existed that produced 100 tons or more of ore; three of these are now closed. The two still operating are located on Babine Lake -- Granisle, and Bell Copper (Noranda). Construction was begun in April of 1979 on the Silver Equity mine located about 20 miles south of Houston, and production is expected to begin in late 1980. This operation is planned as a fairly extensive one with two open pits, three crushing gradients, concentrator, and concentrate leaching facilities. The mine is expected to employ about 200 production workers on three shifts per day, five days a week. A promoter's brochure for Silver Equity promises that:

Silver Equity Mine will provide a stable payroll for many years and an expanded regional economic base for the Houston area. Benefits to the area will begin with the initial construction phase and will include local material and equipment purchases. When the mine is operational, additional benefits will accrue in the tax dollars paid by the mine and its employees. The sale of Equity's minerals, silver, copper and gold, will benefit Canada's balance of payments with the mineral reaching markets through out the world.

As with most promotional material, this brochure is a marvel of half truths. The "stable payroll for many years" turns out be at least 14 years. The material and equipment purchases are more likley to come through Smithers than Houston, since Smithers is already equipped to handle large supply orders. Finally, the benefits of tax dollars to the community have become a particularly sore point, for the Provincial government has exempted Silver Equity from the Houston municipal tax levies, and yet the municipality is expected to foot the bill for providing extra housing, utilities, schools, and other services for the Equity employees. In sum, Houston's economic base has grown thicker and leaner over the years but has not changed much from basic resource extractions in the forestry and mining fields. Nor has there yet been much attempt to diversify the base with small, independent business operations or encouragement for dual occupational opportunities. Houston's future, given the current heavy impacts in lumbering and mining, is likely to fluctuate dramatically with the waves of world conditions and metropolis-based company controls. Unless more locally controlled and diversified operations develop, Houston may well go bust again.

In the meantime, Houston rides a crest of development and grows like Topsy, uncontrolled. Although the North West Report (1977) predicted great things to come for Houston, at this point the local citizens are flustered and frustrated by the rapid development. Having been told in the late '60's to prepare for a huge influx by 1973, the village hurriedly

built houses, extended sewer and water facilities, and generally prepared for the increase. Then the grand plan of Bowater and Bathurst fell through, and the expected population influx didn't materialize, but the village tax payers were left to foot the bill for preparations that no longer seemed necessary. Having re-adjusted their sights back to a smaller population target, then the Weldwood mill was opened and construction workers for the Silver Equity mine also poured in -- to discover that housing and other facilities in the community weren't adequate to meet their numbers. Now, new residents in the community complain that there isn't enough housing, that the single, large supermarket in town, having a monopoly, over-charges, that schoolrooms are too crowded, and that they can't buy many of the things they want without having to drive 40 miles to Smithers. Old residents complain of the slap-dash apartment blocks going up, the "transients" and the "immigrants" that do not fit into established community cultural and social norms, and the fact that their taxes are rising yearly to subsidize a transformation of their community that they don't really want, now that they see what it means. The big mill operations have without doubt brought a much needed infusion of money into the Houston area, but the rapid and largely uncontrolled development has also brought a number of social, economic, and political headaches. (See Table 12 for labour turnover rates.)

Both construction and production workers for the mills and mine have been largely recruited from outside the valley. They are predominantly young, single males who tend to move fairly frequently between jobs and towns. Many of the newcomers are also immigrants (East Indian in particular) and they tend inevitably to socialize among themselves and not mix much with the rest of the community.

Beyond the obvious disruption of old community ways caused by a sudden influx of new and different residents, there is also considerable tension between old-timers over the issue of whether industrial development is a good thing. The two sides line up pretty much as could be expected with the main street and business elements pushing hard to encourage any and all new industrial development and the old-time and rural residents trying hard to maintain what once existed in the way of communitarian structure. Though somewhat hard to judge because of all the cross-currents, it would appear that the development side has won, hands down. That this side enjoyed the backing and considerable resources of Northwood's management is quite clear and is the source of feelings that Houston is now just another company town.

In conjunction with this general economic and social situation is a fairly dramatic change in the political arena as well. Whereas formerly municipal affairs were organized and managed by elected mayor and council and community decision-making followed the general townhall democracy model, now a recently-hired administrator (from Vancouver) manages the municipal office. "Don't call me, I'll call you" is the message from him received by many local citizens. To add to the furor, the current (but outgoing) mayor recently "leaked" the news that there is a \$100,000 deficit in the municipal accounts that no-one seems to be able to explain. The implication and general belief is that the former mayor and council misused funds in attracting and/or accommodating new developers.

In any case, at the present time the economic base in Houston appears to be going up at the direct expense of social cohesion and political unity, which are clearly on the downswing. It may be that in due course as the big mills and mine get well established, social and political processes will also find a stable level. But this level may well be a low one, for increasingly Houston workers with families are going to Smithers to live and commuting back to Houston just for their jobs. "Smithers", they say, "is a nicer place to live".

SMITHERS

In fascinating contrast to this mulligan stew in Houston, Smithers stands out as cordon bleu. As well as enjoying robust economic health, Smithers is pointed to as the epitomy of real "community" in the social and political spheres as well. While the residents of Smithers are justly proud of their highly scenic location at the foot of Hudson's Bay Mountain, spectacular landscape alone cannot account for much of what makes the community spirit and ethic of Smithers seem special.

Although Smithers may have begun as a one-industry, railroad town, the economy has always been relatively diverse, and it is this diversity that seems to be at the base of its economic stability. As a sub-regional centre right from the first, Smithers has maintained a strong tertiary sector. Now, 70% of those employed in Smithers are employed in this sector. While retail trade may account for the greatest proportion of the tertiary sector, recreation and tourism and the hospitality services that accompany them are also important. Tourism has been primarily a summer activity, but fall and winter development in the guiding and outfitting for the ski areas are helping make tourism a year-round aspect of the economic scene. The retail trade people are encouraging this kind of development by jointly planning and financing with the municipal government the re-modelling of Main Street into an alpine theme with chalet type architecture and a mall type arrangement of sidewalks and streets. A major development of the ski hill into a facility that could compete with the already existing resorts in the Okanagan and the lower mainland is the main expansion anticipated in the tourist industry.

As important as the retail and hospitality services, are the public administration services located in Smithers. There has been a deliberate concentration of these services in Smithers largely because of the community's central geographical location between the two major centres in the North, Prince

George and Prince Rupert, but also in recognition of the fact that it has always served as a social hub as well.

Another part of the uniqueness of Smithers, and one of the consistent themes in its economic background, has centred around mining activity. At the outset many who came initially as prospectors stayed as settlers, often combining prospecting and one-man mining operations with farming or other seasonal jobs. Currently, five international mining companies maintain offices in Smithers, but they serve primarily as bases for exploratory operation. Such exploration provides valuable spin-off for the tertiary sector. Not only do the usual retail, financial and service establishments benefit, but exploration activity requiring transportation to remote areas provides business to two helicopter and several small locally-owned airlines.

The only major large-scale mining prospect in the immediate vicinity is much too close to home for the comfort of most residents of Smithers. Under one of the three spectacular hanging glaciers on Hudson's Bay Mountain, commercial quantities of molybdenum are located in a property belonging to American Metal Climax. Local opposition to the development of a mine, however, is very high, and given the past effectiveness of citizens' groups organized to oppose a possible impact, eventual development is not necessarily inevitable. The company is nevertheless quietly preparing by sponsoring its own social and economic impact study of Smithers. In the meantime, other Climax properties (such as the one in Alice Arm) are being developed.

Like mining, agriculture around Smithers has always been an important activity in both the social and economic affairs of the area. In the early days, mixed farms of animals and grain or forage crops were the norm, and agriculture was the main resource industry. Now, agriculture comes second as a source of employment. The large farms and ranches are devoted to cattle (mostly beef but some dairy) while some smaller farms are experimenting with truck gardening.

Marketing and transportation have been the main difficulties in the effort to develop the agricultural industry beyond subsistence. However, marketing in the area between Prince George and Prince Rupert as well as more locally now seems economically feasible, and there is a plan to build a vegetable processing plant in Smithers to achieve this marketing potential. Another problem has been the cost of land. Much of the land in the Smithers area has been frozen by the Provincial government into agricultural land use areas. On the one hand, this prevents breaking up tracts of land that are large enough to support profitable agriculture into small pieces that are not potentially economic. On the other hand, this freeze has driven up the price of land so that these large farms are beyond the reach of most buyers, especially young families who want to start farming. Prices of already existing small acreages have also gone up, and at an even higher rate than for large tracts.

These small land parcels are becoming increasingly attractive to town residents who continue to move out into the nearby rural areas. Indeed, the actual population of the Smithers municipality has declined slightly in recent years while the population in the surrounding rural area has increased. To some extent this movement reflects a general back-to-the-land popularity. In the case of Smithers, it also reflects the highly communitarian spirit that has always been notable. It would appear, then, that it is the rural lifestyle rather than agriculture as an economic enterprise that most appeals. A major part of this lifestyle is the opportunity to be as independent as possible of outside forces. This is not to say that farmers in the Smithers area are not affected by economic conditions in the rest of the country, for, of course, they are -- especially in the beef and dairy industries. But it is to say that Bulkley Valley farmers have demonstrated an ability to develop special adaptations to these external conditions. For instance, when beef prices fell to the point that ranchers would go into

debt if they had to ship their cattle all the way to Vancouver and Edmonton (the main markets traditionally), many ranchers reduced the size of their herds and built cold storage and butchering facilities on their property so that they could sell directly to local consumers. When the beef market rose again, they increased the herds and resumed shipments to Vancouver and Edmonton, while still maintaining their local sales.

This local market preference is much in evidence in Smithers generally. Whenever possible, residents seem to patronize local businesses and products rather than the chain stores. For instance, many residents resolutely continue to buy automobiles from the local dealers when they know the same vehicles are several hundred dollars cheaper in Vancouver and Edmonton. In many cases, of course, needed goods and services are only available from the chain stores. Even here, however, the communitarian ethic prevails. At one time, for example, there were several small, locally owned grocery stores. Super Value bought out one of these local operations and kept the owners (two brothers) on as managers. A fancy, big, new premises was built, but the brothers continued to run the store much as they always had, and local residents were happy. Later, an Overwaitea was built and struggled desperately to lure customers away from Super Value. When Safeway came in and built a huge store, Overwaitea folded, having lost to Safeway most of what little business had been attracted away from Super Value.

The huge international resources backing the Safeway operation have kept it in business, despite a noticeably small number of shoppers. Most town residents still prefer to shop at Super Value though it is older, smaller, and has less selection -- but "the Goodacre boys are locals, and we like the personal consideration we get". To back this statement up, the man who said it went on to tell how he often paid for his groceries with a cheque. When Safeway just opened,

he and his wife went to see and shop. To pay for his groceries, he wrote out a cheque as was his custom. The clerk waved the cheque in the air and loudly called the manager to come to approve it. The customer was so angry and mortified (other customers might think his credit was no good) that he told the manager he would never come again. Having heard this story, we were interested to note that now cheques are cashed by Safeway cashiers without ado. Even so, Super Value is still the number one shopping choice of most residents, who go to Safeway only for sale items or things they can't find in Super Value.

While Houston's economy has been dominated by forestry for some time, in Smithers forestry has only moved up the list to become first relatively recently. Currently, the primary sector is carried on by two sawmills, both locally owned and controlled, and several small, independent logging and milling operations. There is developing, however, a secondary sector in this industry (e.g., a small company manufacturing prefabricated buildings and trusses), and there are hopes that further secondary wood processing operations will develop.

Due, apparently, to the fact that most of the lumber operations around Smithers are locally managed along rather flexible lines, Smithers enjoys a notably high stability in employment in this industry as compared to other communities in the North. This, at least, is the conclusion of a study sponsored by Canada Manpower on labour instability in Northwest B.C. In the whole of this region, the average annual labour turnover for the period 1973-1976 was over 55%. This ranged from a high of 108% in the Queen Charlotte Islands to a low of 17% in Smithers. With respect to the logging industry specifically, which constitutes both the major source of employment and the greatest labour instability, the authors of this report account for Smithers' stability in the following terms:

In the two Smithers [sawmill] operations turnover is not only low, but consistently so. Employment is secure and has grown (in contrast to industry trends). Some speculations about the reasons for the uniqueness of Smithers are as follows:

It is a long established community in a partially agricultural area but other communities in the study area are as old. Other sawmills not too distant east on Highway 16 have extremely high turnover [this is a reference to Houston].

The companies have local and autonomous management. Management personnel are non-transient, do not have to check decisions with upper echelons located elsewhere, are not constrained by inappropriate central policy, can and do take a deep interest in the community and workforce.

Both operations are small or medium in size . . . both companies can take quick advantage of market changes and of gaps in that market [and] both have accomplished a certain degree of forward integration by developing and serving [local] retail lumber markets, thus insulating themselves, to a degree, from the fluctuations of international markets, . . . both do their own logging . . .

The general case of labour stability within the community of Smithers contrasts noticeably with the quite unstable situation in neighbouring communities. Aside from a favourable climate and the stabilizing alternative of employment in local farming, the most likely significant factors in Smithers are . . . companies that are locally owned and locally managed, and a high level of commitment from employees many of whom are active members of a strong local . . . community. (Skeena Manpower Development Committee, January, 1978:30-31.)

One example of how the responsiveness to local conditions and needs is reflected is the selling of lumber to local residents at wholesale prices. Most of the lumber milled in the northwest is shipped out to be sold on the world market, and local residents must buy from retail outlets at world market prices the lumber logged and milled on their doorstep. However, one of the mills in Smithers will sell at wholesale costs to local residents, providing they come to the mill to pick up the lumber. Similarly, employees at the mill are

given "good deals" on lumber and are permitted to use mill equipment for their own purposes in off hours. Such service to local residents is not common practice in neighbouring towns where the large, metropolis-owned mills operate.

Another reason that helps account for the stability in the Smithers area woods industry is the heavy involvement of local people on the Forest Service Advisory Committee. This is a voluntary group of people from the forest industry (both labour and management) as well as local concerned citizens. To date, this group has been quite effective in influencing the B.C. Forest Service with respect to both policy and practice. One outcome of their influence was the refusal by the Smithers Town Council of a tree farm licence on the slopes of Hudson's Bay Mountain. It was the feeling of the Council that environmental and aesthetic disadvantages of logging in the area offered were more important than the revenue that would accrue from the timber sales.

The North West Report, reports of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, the Phase One Labour Instability Study, and many other studies of the Bulkley Valley have made much of the economic stability of the Smithers area. However, the economic stability cannot really be understood except in relation to the strong community ethic that exists. The fundamental principle behind this ethic is that the economy should support the people, not the other way around. Community cohesiveness has traditionally come first in Smithers, and this principle is nowhere more clear than in the local management of economic relations, both internal and external. Internally, for example, residents of the area commonly earn income from several occupations at a time. The farming-logging combination is a familiar one, but many other combinations also exist such as farming and heavy equipment operating, or teaching and log-cabin building, or independent building construction with mill work, and so on. Indeed, Smithers area residents have demonstrated over the years a

unique ability to innovate occupational combinations and services not previously available. Accompanying this multiple occupational propensity is a very frequent and informally organized trading and sharing of goods and services. This sort of reciprocity is, of course, not uncommon in rural areas, but it has been honed to a fine edge in the Smithers area. Finally, there is the strong commitment to buy and sell locally that has already been noted.

Externally, Smithers area residents have been careful about which industries have been encouraged to develop and how. Community organizations of all kinds are very active, and none more so than those organized in response to a potential impact from outside. One example of this political effectiveness is the story of the ski hill. Originally, the ski hill was cleared and a rope tow erected by local citizens donating the materials, time and work. Some of the most enthusiastic also built themselves little cabins. In the summer, a four-wheel drive road allowed motorized access, but in winter skiers hiked the three miles in. The ski hill was at that time a very active local social and recreational project. Outside developers then became interested, for the terrain had great potential. A new all-season road was built, much to the surprise of the local ski club which had organized the project thus far. With the new road, more skiers began coming up, so the ski club raised money to improve the facilities. More cabins were also built. Then all the "squatters" were sent pre-emptory notices by the Provincial government that they were trespassing on Crown land and were to get off or buy the land at a high cost. The "squatters" organized a collective strategy for resisting and in due course won. In the meantime, outside development interests continued to pressure both the Provincial government and the local ski club into making deals that would lead to large-scale development. Control of this development would, of course, be transferred to the developers who would arrange the financing. While a few ski club members favoured this plan (notably some

who had business interests they thought might benefit), most were opposed. They liked the small but friendly and cooperative atmosphere and pace and affordable cost of the ski hill just the way it was. Outside development was rejected but the question of development per se remained a topic of debate. After much of that plus commissioning consultant studies, the ski club decided on a plan to establish jointly with Smithers Town Council an independent, non-profit corporation whose task would be the planning and operation of a \$5.4 million development project. Control of the ski hill and facilities would then remain in local community hands, although outside private enterprise would be permitted to build and run related establishments such as a lodge and a condominium sub-division. Town Council voted to accept this plan, and the new ski corporation is now in the process of being set up.

Of all the communities visited in this pilot study, Smithers stood out as economically stable in a region of general instability. The economy of the Smithers area would seem to be stable not just for straight economic reasons, but because it has been adapted to the social and political needs and expediences deemed important to the indigenous population. The North West Report expressed this when it concluded that:

Residents of the Smithers area have expressed the desire for continued economic stability and diversification, an objective voiced in most communities in British Columbia. Yet Smithers is, and will likely continue to be, one of the relatively few communities capable of achieving this objective reasonably well. That is not to say that problems do not and will not occur . . . However, prospects for dealing with these problems and for maintaining the delicate balance between economic prosperity and other aspects of

the 'quality of life' in the Smithers area will be fairly good as long as current levels of community participation and involvement in economic and resource planning can be sustained. (B.C. Ministry of Economic Development, 1977:204.)

HAZELTON

Since 1912 when the Grand Trunk Pacific tracks were laid on the other side of the river, the Hazelton area has steadily declined to become the most economically depressed part of the Bulkley Valley. Unfortunately, it is not coincidental that the population of the area around Hazelton is roughly half Native. The North West Report notes that at the peak of seasonal employment, the unemployment figure among the Natives around Hazelton is 52%, rising to 73% in the offseason. However, the Report goes on to note that employment rates for non-Natives are not much better and that according to figures obtained from income tax returns, the average income in Hazelton area "was \$7,587 for 1975, an income level which was only about 75 percent of that for the North West as a whole (\$9,990)". (B.C. Ministry of Economic Development, 1977:206.)

Up until the late 1950's the economic situation in the Hazeltons was not so serious. Many individuals made subsistence livings as independent loggers and farmers and in traditional Native activities such as fishing and trapping. As in Houston, however, the change in B.C. Forest Service policy in the late '50's reduced the number of small, independent logging and milling operations and consolidated the woods industry into a few large hands. Fishing and trapping also became increasingly less viable as economic supports. North of Hazelton, agriculture in the Kispiox Valley has provided subsistence for a relatively small number of farmers/ranchers but is not a major component of the economic base. A Gitksan Tribal Council brief summarizes the economic picture with special reference to Natives:

Before the Europeans came, we had a stable, varied, self-perpetuation and productive economy. Leather tanning, furniture design and craftsmanship, fishing, trapping, snowshoe manufacturing, and leathery garment manufacturing were all part of our traditional economy. This economy, along with the rest of our traditional way of life, was destroyed by the government and the companies that "opened up" our region.

Then there came the transitional economy. We suffered because of the loss of our traditional ways and customs, but even so, the transitional economy of the 'thirties', 'forties and early 'fifties was a superior one compared to our present economy. The transitional economy was relatively stable; it was based on multiple resource use and the vision of a perpetually renewable economy. Small operators harvested the forest in a consistent and responsible manner. Farmers, trappers and fishermen found a good livelihood.

In the last twenty years all of this had changed. Presently there are only twenty quota holders in the Skeena Public Sustained Unit and the three largest -- Price Skeena, Cancel/Pohle Lumber and Rim Forest Products -- have control of 83% of the total cut. Logging is the monopoly of a few large concerns; fishing is becoming increasingly unprofitable; trap lines are destroyed as clear cuts spread over the countryside. (Gitksan Tribal Co 1976:5-6.)

Currently, the economic base in Hazelton, such as it is, rests primarily on the sawmill in South Hazelton owned by Rim Forest Products. As Table 15 indicates, this operation provides employment for less than 250 people. Although Rim would like to expand, B.C. Forest Service has not increased their allocation of timber sales, apparently because it feels that with two other large mills operating in the Kitwanga area some 30 miles away, timber reserves for Rim could be increased only at the expense of the other companies.

The other resource industries, mining and agriculture, provide relatively little of the economic base. Although there have in the past been large operational mines in the area, there

is little mining activity presently. Agriculture, too, is limited although more prevalent than mining. In 1976, of the 49 census farms (those of one acre or more and sales of \$1,200 or more) in the region between Moricetown to Cedarvale and up the Kispiox Valley, only 16 reported sales of \$5,000 or more. Cattle ranching and/or the raising of hay constitute the main elements of this agricultural activity.

Another major source of employment and income in the Hazeltons comes from the 50 bed Wrinch Memorial Hospital. Originally established by a Methodist missionary/doctor, this first hospital in the Bulkley Valley was built in 1904 by Dr. H.C. Wrinch. He was apparently a man of inexhaustible energy who regularly travelled long distances (as far as Houston:) to give medical assistance and who ruled with absolute authority the hospital and a nursing programme along with its vegetable garden, water system and ice facilities.

Perhaps the most notable component of the tertiary sector in Hazelton is the 'Ksan operation. 'Ksan began as a museum in old Hazelton in which Native artifacts were to be collected and preserved. Although some of the Native people were involved in 'Ksan at this early stage of its development, the motivating force behind it came from a few members of the white community. The development of 'Ksan was delayed and hampered by considerable difficulty in obtaining funds, although many attempts were made to get grants from various government and business groups. The blossoming of the project was finally made possible by Federally funded grants associated with the Provincial Centennial celebrations. The GitksanCarrier Tribal Council also contributed funds. Eventually, scaled down models of traditional longhouses were built along the river in replica of a Native village and 'Ksan has attracted many tourists passing by on Highway 16. In addition to selling crafts and leading tours through the longhouses to see the artifacts and to hear individually composed narrations

by the Native guides, 'Ksan has also provided opportunities and encouragement for the learning and practice of carving, dancing, and other traditional art forms.

The unhappy economic picture in the Hazelton area is slightly redeemed by social picture. The main source of income for the majority of residents in the Hazelton area would seem to be the government. According to data collected by the Gitksan-Carrier Tribal Council in 1976, the total bill for social assistance in the area (welfare, Work Opportunity project grants, child care services, etc.) was nearly two million dollars in 1975 -- for a population of approximately 5,000 people. Thus, if the question is asked, "How do the people in the Hazelton area live?", the answer must be "poorly".

Some of the economic problems experienced in the Hazeltons are clearly related to the fact that there are three quite separate communities (more, in fact, as will become apparent later) that have, until recently, never been able to consolidate their social and political resources in order to develop effective strategies for coping with the economic problems. One writer has summed up the Hazeltons' problems this way:

With all its importance as a distributing centre, Hazelton never took on the habiliments of a town. It never organized and remained to the end a place of temporary abode for the travellers rushing east and west. Even the essentials of sanitation were neglected, for the visitor to the village in the 1920's could still see the Chinamen delivering water from door to door in oil cans filled from the river. The building of the railroad down the west side of the Bulkley and on down the Skeena was a hard blow to Old Hazelton and for a time threatened its very existence. The promoters of the new townsites of South Hazelton and New Hazelton, along the rail line, confidently expected the town to move bodily across the Bulkley and join in the march of progress. But the oldtimers of Hazelton were stubborn and refused to be stampeded and the town continued to be the distributing centre for the District, in spite of efforts of the rival

townsites to displace it. (F. Geddes Large, 1957: 53-4.)

Another reason why people in the Hazeltons have not developed an economically viable community is that from its origins, affairs generally in Hazelton have been dominated by a few people. Among the Natives, certain Houses or Crests and the families belonging to them have traditionally held higher status and hence wielded more power than other crests. Among Whites, in Old Hazelton, power was concentrated initially in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company Factor and later with a few families. Another small clique of powerful white families formed in the Kispiox Valley. While the intentions of these individuals were undoubtedly to promote the improved welfare of all, the result seems to have been the development of a strongly paternalistic pattern in economic as well as social and political matters. In consequence, privatization and dependence have been the general response of a large proportion of the population while the small groups of powerful few competed with each other. An example of this internal warfare is the building of Highway 27 north to the Yukon border. Originally, it was expected and planned to come down through the Kispiox Valley and Old Hazelton to join Highway 16 at New Hazelton. But the farming clique up the Kispiox were bitterly opposed to the highway. Being better organized though smaller in number, they were able to outweigh the more numerous but disorganized promoters in Old and New Hazelton who couldn't agree among themselves on a strategy to oppose the Kispiox group. In the end, the Kispiox people won, and the highway now leaves Highway 16 at Kitwanga to proceed north.

Relations between Natives and Whites have also always been strongly paternalistic. While the Hudson's Bay Company Factor and a White family virtually monopolized the economic capacities of the Natives, the missionaries staked out the Native soul as their territory. Unlike their confreres on

the Coast, however, the early missionaries in the Hazelton area seem to have been unusually bigoted in their treatment of the Natives. One missionary worker described Natives as "highly excitable, very noisy, cruel, a gambler, dog-eater, slave driver to his wife, and a firm believer in evil spirits".

(H. McCallum & K. Taylor McCallum, 1979:103.)

Fearing, perhaps, that culture was not only ugly and evil but also contagious, strict segregation of Natives and Whites was practised as much as possible. The hospital, for instance, had an Indian ward and a White ward, and Natives were expected to use the back door. Schools were also segregated with Natives attending the Federally supported institution and Whites the Provincial. Even in the Church itself a rope down the centre aisle kept Natives in their place on one side only. Economically, instead of developing adaptations or innovation to maintain their original economic independence as much as possible, the prevalent response has been for Natives to depend on government support -- another form of paternalism.

In overview, it would thus appear that from its early years, economic control in the Hazelton area has been limited to a paternalistic elite who have systematically discouraged or thwarted modern economic development from outside and independent adaptations from inside. Currently, this picture shows some hope of changing as the Gitksan-Carrier Tribal Council increasingly co-ordinate and consolidate efforts to implement strategies for socio-economic development. While part of the Tribal Council's efforts have been directed towards land claims issues, they have also clearly recognized the need for mobilizing changes internally as well. A Declaration presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs in 1977 outlines a strategy for a task force on socio-economic development to analyze the problems and plan future changes. One outcome of their strategy was a Research Training Frograllmte of local Native residents undertaken this past summer in conjunction with Carleton University. Even more recently (September)

the Tribal Council received funding under the Local Employment Assistance Programme (LEAP) to undertake a research project in their own area using their own people to discover sources of socio-economic needs and problems.

Of all the separate cliques and groups in the Hazelton area, the Gitksan Tribal Council thus seems the most organized and motivated to deal with the social, economic, and political issues that plague this part of the Bulkley Valley.

Conclusion

As the foregoing has already strongly hinted, the communities of Houston, Smithers, and Hazelton are as different in their social spheres as they are in the economic. While it is more convenient analytically to consider these spheres separately, there is no question but that they are in reality closely woven together. Equally important to note is that current conditions are very much related to past events. Indeed, it is curious to see the extent to which the way each community began seems to have set the pattern and atmosphere of its subsequent development.