

Nation to preserve areas "so as to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations".

The present practice involves a degree of denial of rights of local government that is simply unacceptable in a democracy. Residents of Banff and Jasper presently do not have the right to elect a local council with authority; or the power to tax for municipal purposes; or any direct influence over the future of their community or the conduct of its affairs. Too many local decisions are taken by public servants who are located in Ottawa, 2,000 miles away. In practice, little real authority resides with the Western Regional Office of Parks Canada, local town managers or local superintendents. This form of absentee government has not resulted in the high standard of architecture and planning, which should characterize townsites which exist in national parks.

In Banff, an Advisory Council of citizens has been established. It is elected and directed by local residents, but its only power is to advise. In Jasper, residents decline to have a Council without powers, and Ottawa declines to engage in continuing formal discussions with any other kind of agency.

Your Committee believes that townsites within National Parks can never be exactly like townsites elsewhere. The federal government, as custodian of the National interest in National Parks, requires ultimate control over the expansion of the limits of park townsites. Ownership of land should remain vested in the Crown in right of Canada, and federal authorities must have a voice in determining the general plans and development of the communities.

However, local residents also need the opportunity to exercise significantly more control over their own affairs. Recently, there has been movement toward that goal, but real progress has been slow.

In March, 1970, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Alberta voted unanimously to support a resolution which authorized the province to prepare a plan for local self-government.

In March, 1972, the Premier of Alberta tabled a report by the Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs, on means to achieve a greater degree of local government in the two townsites.

Since April, 1973, representatives of Parks Canada and the Banff Advisory Council have held discussions about the formal granting of certain municipal powers to a local government body in that townsite.

On November 21st, Parks Canada established a special Committee to prepare, by April 30th, 1974, recommendations for a degree of local government in Banff.

Your Committee believes that study should relate to Jasper as well as Banff, and that the study should be available for public discussion early enough to allow full public hearings before the heavy tourist season begins in 1974. The April 30th deadline would mean, in effect,

that public hearings could not be held until the fall, and the progress toward local government would be delayed unnecessarily.

Consequently, your Committee recommends:

(1) That before March 15th, 1974, Parks Canada, in consultation with the Banff Advisory Council and representatives designated by the citizens of Jasper, prepare a proposal to bring substantial local government to those townsites, and that the proposal should include a full, reliable and detailed statement of the costs and revenues associated with local government.

(2) That the committee established in (1) above should recommend a formula to insure that the federal government contributes its fair financial share to any form of local government in the Townsites.

(3) That the proposed form of local government should be the subject of full public hearings in Banff and Jasper, which should be concluded before May 15th, 1974. At that time the result of hearings should be assessed, and firm recommendations prepared by a committee comprised of one representative each of the residents of Banff, the residents of Jasper, Parks Canada, and the Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs, all under the voting chairmanship of a fifth individual who is to be mutually agreed upon by the other four members.

(4) That the recommendations should go to plebiscite in Banff and Jasper on some date before October 15, 1974.

(5) That if approved by plebiscite, implementation of a substantial form of local government should begin, in a significant way, before December 15th, 1974.

Local government will require the power to tax. Presently the federal government collects, instead of municipal taxes, fees for land rental. Those fees derive from the fact that land in Parks cannot be held freehold, but only by lease, to which fees apply. However, the fees vary from case to case, and are a subject of serious contention between residents and officials. While it may well be necessary to maintain some system of land rental, after local government is secured, that will almost certainly be a different system than is now applied.

Your Committee recommends:

(6) That the question of land rentals be reviewed in light of the proposal for local government submitted to plebiscite.

Housing in both Banff and Jasper is of particular concern to your Committee. There is a continuing and acute shortage of accommodation which has been relieved only temporarily by the recent release of lots for residential development in Banff and mobile homes in Jasper. A problem raised by Banff residents with the Committee is the significant extent of the ownership of homes by non residents.