

"URANIUM CAPITAL" STILL GROWING

The three mills operating here are now concentrating about 4,000 tons of uranium-bearing ore.

The Townsfolk of Uranium City in the heart of northern Saskatchewan's rich Beaverlodge uranium field call it Canada's uranium capital. And well they may, for Uranium City is the mushrooming supply and administrative centre of one of the richest uranium-bearing areas in the world. "The Saskatchewan News" reports:

In five years, it has grown from a rough-hewn shanty camp, hemmed by towering pines and camel's-back ridges of precambrian rock, to a modern town, boasting dial telephones, street lighting, new schools, a 25-bed hospital and a sewer and water system now being installed.

Optimistic community residents have staked \$3,000,000 on new public works building this year and next. The money is being borrowed on debentures subscribed by the Saskatchewan Government, along with local mines and residents.

Work is under way on a sewer and water system designed to initially serve 5,000 people. A new public school is nearing completion and a new high school will go up next year. The recently completed union hospital compares favorably with any of similar size in the West.

The "old originals" predict Uranium City will reach city status within a decade. They envision a microwave system bringing long distance telephone communication and television. Eventually, they hope to see a road come in from the "outside".

A unique form of local government, geared to remote area conditions, guides Uranium City's steady growth -- the town's population recently topped 2,000; another 2,500 live in the vicinity.

The Municipal Corporation of Uranium City and District administers both town and surrounding mining area, the first local government to do so in Saskatchewan. Corporation Manager Greg Darychuk says it most closely parallels the "county system" of administration.

Life is busy and hurried. Trucks laden with uranium ore rumble through town day and night. Planes buzz overhead continuously. There is new building everywhere -- homes, schools, business and utility buildings.

To date this year, building permits have been issued to the value of \$130,650. More than 110,000 tons of freight have been barged into Beaverlodge, since lake shipping opened last June.

"Things can't move fast enough around here", says taxi driver Steve Lewiski. "That's the way it is in the mining town. It's different from an industrial town, or any other kind of a town, for that matter."

Norm Jeppeson, local hotel manager and enthusiastic Beaverlodge booster, says there are still plenty of business opportunities open for people with "drive and imagination".

Among other things, Norm says the town could use a professional photographer.

Uranium City's business directory today lists -- in alphabetical order taking up seven full pages -- about every kind of business found in larger centres "outside" and then some. The list starts at air transportation (three air services serve Uranium City) and runs the gamut to a wood working and cabinet shop.

There is even a popcorn and hot dog stand in Uranium City. Owner-operator Lorraine Fisher, twenty-five, of Stettler, Alberta, opened the stand about three months ago on a hunch it would "pan out". It did.

Betty Taylor, wife of the local resources department conservation officer, gives a woman's view of Uranium City.

"People do things in a big way here. A service club will think nothing of raising a few thousand dollars for some community betterment project. They ought to rename the place 'Little Texas'."

She adds: "You'd be surprised at all the active community organizations we have -- the chamber of commerce, volunteer fire brigade, Canadian Legion, Kiwanis. We women have the hospital auxiliary, girl guides and several church groups."

Mrs. Taylor claims this is a community made up largely of specialists. "Many are highly trained in specialized fields and they are naturally very mentally alert, which makes for a stimulating atmosphere."

Dr. B. LaBelle, one of four doctors serving the Beaverlodge community, says it has a young healthy population, with a high birth rate.

"Psychologically, we're a happy bunch of people, mainly because we're busy. Most of the people are here to make a permanent home and are working hard at it. There are a few, though, who are just in to make a stake and get out."

Wages are high. Bob Penner makes about \$800 a month at a local mine company; sweetens this with another \$150 monthly by working evenings in a beverage room.

Living costs are high, too. A long freight haul (Uranium City is 500 miles from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and Edmonton, Alberta) doubles the price of some items, mainly perishables such as vegetables and fruit. Clothes are about 10 per cent higher than in Prince Albert, or Edmonton.

"ORIGINALS" REMAIN

Many of Uranium City's original residents are still around. Major Paul Vincent says he had to scratch to make ends meet when he set up an oil agency business here in 1952. Today, he is a wealthy man.

The colorful Gus Hawker, who inevitably greeted strangers during the rush years of