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PART III: THE REACTIONS OF TOWNSPEOPLE IN THE STUDY AREA

Townspeople in the Montana Sector

There is a good deal of suspicion among the inhabitants of Rosebud County that much of the tax money generated by coal development will be used by the more populous areas of the state. According to one informant, this is no longer a suspicion.

The percent of net proceeds tax paid the county has been reduced, with the balance going into the state general fund. Property taxes are paid and then redistributed on the basis of population for equalized school foundation funding. Consequently, no so-called "impact" money is made available to the affected counties.

Some even think that the larger cities of Montana are pushing for coal development in order to get more tax money out of it--a dollar benefit for which eastern Montana would pay a high social cost. One resident stated:

This suspicion is substantiated by the fact that a reduction to the county's share of the net proceeds tax was passed by the legislature, last year, and that \$136,000 was taken out of the Rosebud County school funds to finance education in Montana's urban communities.

All this has given people in this part of the state the feeling that many other Montanans would like to join out-of-staters in taking advantage of the area. Many informants stated that the coal companies were not being taxed enough

or were evading responsible action in this department.¹

One informant commented:

Traditionally, legislation in Montana has been written for the benefit of large ventures. This same tradition is still evident in the state's tax structure.

Whether or not sufficient tax money from coal will flow into the county, at least some locals are already enjoying substantial economic benefits.

The Forsyth residents interviewed showed considerable reluctance to examine the nature of their good economic fortune; this reluctance is understandably affecting their ability to plan ahead. Several informants reported perceiving a pervasive sense of greed in the community and a

¹For example, some Rosebud County locals have observed that the companies report the evaluation of their equipment, and county officials are not always able to determine its accuracy. This procedure suggests to these locals that the companies are not carrying their fair share of the tax load and do not intend to. In fact, some informants noted, it appears that they are deliberately seeking ways to avoid doing so. In contrast, a Montana Power executive stated, "We even try to report equipment on railroad cars so that we can pay more taxes to the county."

Another tax concern involves reclamation. Some feel that the cost of reclamation should be separated from rather than tied into net proceeds for tax purposes since by artificially inflating reclamation "costs," net proceeds tax can be greatly reduced; others prefer not to think of reclamation at all, assuming (or hoping) that company plans will bear fruit in due course.

concerted effort on the part of coal and power companies to play up to the latent greediness present in some businessmen and landowners. Some in Forsyth who originally completely welcomed economic development are now beginning to complain of such attendant social costs as a continually {overcrowded downtown area} Also, a feeling of fatalism about their future was reported cynically by some area locals because of their view of the power of the big companies, and resignedly by others because "you can't stop progress." For the most part it appears that, whether their current concerns and interests are primarily economic or not, residents are very much oriented to the present, although the ranchers have more interest in preserving the past than do the townspeople because they are more concerned about the possible long-range adverse effects from coal development which could put them out of business.

Few townspeople in Forsyth are upset about development in regard to both what has already happened and what is anticipated in the future. They feel it will benefit most people. One individual who agreed with this view stated that the life-styles of people in Forsyth had not been significantly affected. According to her, people who have been here a long time "feel they have a priority on

the place but that will go by the board before long."

Another stated:

Most of us would not want our way of life to change very much. If there is a large expansion, it could seriously affect us. The effect so far is not very great.

However, one informant did not like the idea that the local women were being exposed to "foul talk and dirty people who are very noticeable in the bars now"; most local men would agree that the women should be treated as ladies, in or out of taverns.

Commenting on the population influx so far, one towns-
person stated that it "has been gradual enough so that it
hasn't hit us very hard." However, Forsythians are aware
of being urbanized. For example, one said that he used
to know everybody within a hundred-mile radius but now
knows only about 30 percent of the people in the area.
Many of these new people anticipate being in Forsyth for
an extended period. Until additional permanent housing
is available at Colstrip, many employees there whose jobs
are expected to continue for some time will likely choose
to settle in Forsyth; as such, ^{by who.} they are believed to make
potentially better citizens than the more temporary new-
comers, most of whom have been and will continue to be at
Colstrip.

who are these
new people?

With more housing going up at the construction site, builders in Forsyth are naturally hesitant to engage in what they fear may turn out to be an overinvestment in the housing market. It is difficult to anticipate needs of this kind for more than two or three years ahead, by which time present construction activities on Colstrip's units one and two will be over and a decision will have been made regarding the construction of units three and four. A go-ahead would signal an additional three or four years of economic activity at Forsyth at approximately the present level, but the reaction to uninterrupted development is no longer generally favorable. The businessmen, for example, have indicated a growing desire to have a pause before units three and four are constructed so that the impact of the first two units can be absorbed and assessed and in order to better determine what additional construction would mean.² One expressed the fear, "Where will development stop?" He also added, "Montana Power needs to be open with people about its plans."

Most agree that while development seems to have resulted in more money being around now, the quality of

²Ranchers have also expressed this desire.

life for townspeople has not become noticeably different. Sympathy for the ranchers' plight was directly expressed: the cost of labor, equipment, and supplies for farms and ranches has risen sharply--putting pressure on landowners who need to expand in order to survive. One middle-aged businessman, a lifelong resident of the area, emphasized that landowners were not as interested in the money they could get from coal as they were in keeping their land and hence their life-style. While land shortages are affecting ranchers and town residents alike, the latter (excluding newcomers) are not nearly so concerned with this aspect of development as they are with the pressures being brought on the schools, the sewer system, and especially the city water supply.

Until the city council moved to deal with the community's water problem a few weeks ago, Forsyth residents were more worried about their city water system than about any other immediate community problem associated with the coal situation. People in town are reportedly still planning to drill more wells to water their lawns in an effort to supplement the inadequate local supply of water available from an outdated system. They evidently believe that the town will have a modern water system only after the present one is definitely replaced. Some are resentful

of having to have the new system, needed largely for the sake of the newcomers in town who, according to one informant, "will not be here long enough to pay for it."

The new residents in Colstrip appear to be much less settled than their Forsyth counterparts are. Some persons leave town because they are too bored here.³ "You can't even find a place to keep a horse." A lot of both single and married men have chosen to commute from Forsyth, where there at least is a bowling alley and a movie theater. Some of the new workers find they are faced with no job security at all--they could be laid off at any time. Out-of-state people feel they have lower priority in this regard than in-state workers have. However, the pay scale and working conditions on these jobs are considered pretty good for the most part. Other immediate concerns, such as getting groceries, are changing as desired stores and facilities get built. Newcomers are quite concerned with the educational opportunities available locally, and several indicated a desire for a more varied school program than what was currently offered. "If school people

³The Mormon church was cited (by a non-Mormon) as the only group which was making a big effort to be helpful to newcomers by welcoming them and providing activities.

think of you as temporary, they won't be willing to put themselves out for you."

Other persons are attracted by life in Colstrip. Several interviewed said they liked the town's small size, although one teacher indicated that the move took some adjusting: "It took us a while to learn to shop by the month and not by the day when we moved to Colstrip." One newcomer from Billings, a mother of three young children, commented, "Living here brings a family closer together because you aren't always running off to K-Mart." She and her husband would prefer to live on a small piece of land and to own their home rather than be in town, but she "put an ad for land in the paper like everyone else does when they come" and got no response. They like working for a small company that cares about its employees. Another newcomer disagreed with them.

They [the company] just walk all over the little man, and we are just white slaves is all. {The money is great, but they take it all away from you}[through the high cost sustained in living in a one-company job site].

*They come
every day.*

This person's husband, however, pointed out that the good wages (thirteen to fourteen thousand per year for skilled labor), strong unions, and free weekends were some of the attractive features of working in Colstrip.

Newcomers and locals were asked about their views of their ranch neighbors. One local housewife in Colstrip responded by saying that she considered the ranchers a complaining lot: they complain about increased taxes but "mainly because they don't own coal." This informant cited what she believed to be good progress made by those seeking to reclaim stripped land, indicating that she does not share ranchers' concern about the success of reclamation efforts. Because of her husband's good association with Montana Power and the fact that her parents were ranchers in central Montana, one of the newcomers interviewed felt she was in a position to see both sides of the coal issue.

But the ranchers here don't tell both sides. You'd think MPC was stealing their land when they're really getting a lot of money for it. . . . I know from my work experience around the state that there are ranches for sale that they can buy.

Locals in Forsyth were much more sympathetic with the problems landowners reported.

Other informants felt that the ranchers were not really adversely affected by coal-related activities and cited examples. One Billings lawyer working with leases said:

I've never seen a landowner yet that didn't have another ranch in mind if he can just get money for the one he's on. That's typical.

Ranchers are as happy as can be to let you drill [exploratory] on their land because you agree to let them use the water for wells. . . . We give them

fifty dollars a hole and the right to case the water, and they're happy with that arrangement.

He also acknowledged some of the difficulties for both landowners and himself.

Landowners just have to decide whether they can ranch along with mining. If they say they can't, I just go right on down the road and don't bother them. . . . With oil and gas leases you can sign up fifteen a day, but with coal leases you have to live with them. We learned the hard way at Sarpy Creek--don't buy coal leases until you have the surface. In Powder River we have to buy the surface leases first, then wait as long as two years for federal leases and then anybody can go in and bid on it.

His views of the land vary.

I have a ranch and I ran some miners off. I don't want them spoiling my beautiful place. I won't lease for even oil and gas exploration for fear they'll find something. But that's different because that is beautiful land, more desirable than this land we're talking about.

Lawyers' attempts to file for reservoir sites, which involved threatening landowners with condemnation, were reportedly made only because the state had failed in its duty to file for that water; and if no one filed, Wyoming and North Dakota would impound it. The three-year moratorium on industrial use of water from the Yellowstone and its tributaries may give those states a chance to do that. Various informants agreed that Montana should be protected from water rights usurpation by North Dakota and Wyoming and

that industry should pay for water development.⁴ The water rights question is bothering more and more people, including landowners north of the Yellowstone who are out of the coal belt. Few would mind if the companies relied on storing spring run-off water but are not sure that such a source will be sufficient for anticipated industrial needs.

Informants stated that big companies want big coal reserves in order to increase the value of their stock on the market and to have a replacement for other fuel they are losing because of shortages. They are also interested in locating and obtaining the rights to low-sulphur coal. One prominent Billings land broker summed up the crux of the matter by saying: "In three years it [coal development activity] will all be over for us. The coal companies will be located by then." In other words, all leasing and land sales activity will be completed.

According to the land brokers interviewed, coal companies are having difficulty in dealing with landowners

⁴One informant stated that the Water Resources Board, which was not allocated the money needed to enforce Montana's 1973 water law, has had hundreds of applications for water under the new law but has no money to publish or otherwise start to work on them. The adjudication procedures need to be carried out stream by stream; and if they are not, this informant believes, the moratorium may really be needed.

because the former cannot understand that offering more money will not automatically resolve any problems in negotiating for leases. The landowner's values must be determined and a lease written that takes these values into account. Because ranchers fear having to deal with a railroad, coal company, or the federal government, who are considered inaccessible if something goes wrong, land brokers are used as go-betweens. One stated, "We will stand in your [rancher's] shoes, be a buffer, be responsible, be available." However, these informants are also concerned about one company's extended buying rather than leasing in the Decker-Birney area, wondering what will happen to an area where a big industry owns so much land. They report that a great deal of money is being offered to the ranchers here so that the coal company will be in a stronger position to negotiate with a large ranching business that borders these ranches.

In spite of their expressed concern for the landowners, the land brokers stated that they had sold the companies on their singular ability to package coal-rich ranch land into economically attractive, strip-minable units and were capitalizing on the companies' need for people who understood both the legal aspects of coal development and the uncertainties felt by area residents. They indicated that

they did considerable lobbying at both the state and federal level to try to influence policy and that if the federal government would establish a leasing policy it would minimize the economic pressures and gambles for everyone. Various policies were cited as needed and concerned whether or not to allow mining without the land-owner's permission; whether or not legal title to surface rights is needed or just a bond for anticipated damage; when federal coal will be leased; and whether or not the government can or will restrict development of power generating complexes, gasification plants, and other industry.

See Jim's
yhis-

Although mine-mouth generating plants would mean more mining contracts and thus more secure employment for miners, the "people pollution" problem which would be created thereby has prompted informants in this group to feel that it is more desirable to process the coal elsewhere than locally. Even the present activity has not been wholeheartedly received for this reason.⁵ These townspeople would prefer

⁵Miners say this is not as nice a place in which to live as it was when they first came here because of the construction workers who have arrived. Miners do not want too many people around, and they do not like the kinds of people who are moving in. Because a number of miners are Mormons and are thus nondrinkers and heavily family and church oriented, they have little in common with construction workers who normally do not abstain or who have had to leave their families behind.

Miners vs.
Construction
workers.

that industrialization be kept on a relatively small scale even though, like construction workers, they are subject to irregular layoffs when coal contracts begin and end and their salaries are good, with many drawing overtime pay. As a group, they generally believe mined land can be reclaimed--although some are cynical about the claims made by the companies.

The reclamation issue notwithstanding, one informant, a county official, believes that it is the landowners who have nothing to sell who find it hard to feel good about the industrialists. This person has little sympathy for the landowners and thinks they are overly possessive about their property. He also feels that the quality of newcomers, overall, has been good. Few complaints have been formally voiced to Rosebud County officials about the Montana Power Company; but the possibility of condemning land for power transmission line rights-of-way and reservoirs has added to an abounding insecurity and uncertainty, which bother most people in the study area, including Indians.

The Northern Cheyenne tribe owns all the mineral rights to coal on its reservation. Three Indian informants observed that Indian landowners feel they are not adequately represented on the tribal council, and the

Northern Cheyenne Landowners' Association was organized to look after surface owners' interests. When ranchers here disagree on coal, their interpersonal problem is great because they are much closer to each other both physically and socially than are ranchers in the adjoining Decker-Birney area. The traditionalists are against tearing up the ground, and it is the younger and older tribal members who tend to be in this group. The more acculturated Cheyennes tend to favor development. Some feel they should mine the coal themselves. Those who would say, "Let's let them mine the coal," are not vocal and reportedly are probably in the minority. Speaking for many, one informant said resignedly that mining would be done here despite the general feelings against it because the external pressures to mine were enormous--"So what's the use of fighting it?"

Some informants recognize that what happens in the Decker-Birney area will affect the reservation and that what happens on the reservation will likewise affect the surrounding area. Two persons indicated that the tribal council should modernize and that the tribal government needs to become more functional and responsive to the needs of the people, especially now that industrialization seems imminent. Because everyone is related to everyone

else here and there are so many political factions on the reservation, these informants felt that the very process of doing social impact research here would probably do more harm than good. However, the tribal officials contacted believe it is likely that the tribe will soon have to intensify its efforts to obtain needed social impact data.

Townspeople in the Wyoming Sector

Oil industry personnel. Presently there are about fifty oil rigs operating in Campbell County (which would employ about 750 drillers and roughnecks). As a group, oil laborers and their wives have been the least aware or concerned about coal development and its consequences. Some have said, "It doesn't concern me--I am here for my job and I may be moving on next month." Because oil activity in Campbell County has become fairly stabilized, however, the majority of the oil laborers can plan on being in Gillette for some time. The concern most often expressed by them has to do with the wages they are making, and many often bring up the fact that the companies they work for offer no benefits such as insurance or retirement. One worker stated that if he was killed his wife could expect to receive less than two thousand dollars.

$5 \times 4 = 20$
20

Many of the workers have made application to work with the coal companies because they would like the protection that a union would give them. One informant said that oilfield hands voted down joining a union because the companies had recently given them a dollar an hour raise, but he also said that they may vote to join a union in the future if the drilling companies try to change the present working schedules. If the companies implement plans to go to a work schedule of six days on and two days off, as opposed to the present seven-day work week in effect now, roughnecks and drillers would lose two to three hundred dollars per month. If these workers are forced to take such a cut, the benefits a union offers would be much more attractive.

has this happened?

Oilfield workers normally do not have the same long-term concerns as other Gillette residents, apparently because of the temporary nature of their work situation. For example, all of the laborers interviewed live in mobile homes and generally are content with trailer living. One informant said, "That's the way us people have to live." Another said he was living in a trailer "because I didn't come here to spend all my wages for rent," and trailer living is less expensive and often the only available housing. None of those interviewed expressed anger at

some of the local comments and letters to the editor that trailers and trailer parks were messy and junky, saying in effect, "If the shoe fits, wear it." Workers seldom invest money in permanent housing or in improving their physical surroundings; if living in a trailer park, the latter is usually impossible anyway.

Most oil workers interviewed are concerned about the high cost of living and blame the greed of the local businessmen for it. They believe they are still being taken advantage of although, they concede, not as badly as when the oil boom first started. "It was oil that made this town although they [locals] still don't like to admit it" is a statement often heard and indicates some of the resentment that even long-time oil workers still feel. Some indicated that they had faced similar situations in nearly every town they had worked in and that Gillette was not as bad as some. Many who have been in Gillette for four or five years consider it a good place to live.

The other group of oil-related people living in Gillette are production and managerial people, who have more permanent and higher paying jobs. Many of those interviewed in this group live in permanent housing and are much more likely to be involved in community affairs. Some have been on city councils and school boards in other

towns and "are qualified people".[?] Members in this group tend to be more concerned about how the growth of Gillette will affect them; and some talk about the strength they have, along with other newcomers, saying that it will not be long before oil people will be on the school board and city council. The wives in this group usually belong to the Petroleum Wives Club, which has very few wives of oil field laborers in its membership. The Petroleum Wives Club is a common interest and recreational organization and has tended not to get involved with political issues as yet. One school official observed, however, that they would be a group to reckon with if they did become an action organization.

Other Gillette residents. Nearly everyone is concerned with the large influx of people expected; in fact, this may be the only common concern here although it is doubtful that the majority of residents have any conception of the ramifications of development that the coal, power, and related companies are presently anticipating. Just recently a coal official interviewed said that there was more activity planned for the Gillette area in a shorter time than he had ever dreamed of.⁶ Approximately ten of the major coal

⁶The companies already have acquired the surface rights to many coal-bearing sites.

companies involved have now formed a task force to figure out how the influx of people will be handled. The governor called a special meeting at the request of one of the companies, and the group which met decided to examine the possibility of ^{? two?} a new town between Gillette and Douglas (the latter is 112 miles south of Gillette). The same official quoted above also said that discounting all the people who would be working in southern Campbell and northern Converse counties and living in the new town, Gillette could have thirty thousand people by 1978 just from projects in the northern part of the county.

Many city residents feel that the growth expected will cause their taxes to rise. Persons on fixed salaries are quite concerned about cost increases, particularly regarding rent and other necessities. Those who chose to live in Gillette because of the attraction of outdoor recreation fear its recreational advantages will now decline with more people competing for the same antelope, the same camping site, and the like. In spite of the misgivings, however, most people believe that the coal should be extracted. Some cite the energy crisis and others simply say, "You can't stop progress," meaning that it would be wrong to try to interfere with or stop what is generally thought to be inevitable.

Townspeople who were contacted are not particularly concerned with the various problems accompanying industrial growth because they have seldom been directly confronted with them. For example, most of those in all categories interviewed said they had little concern whether or not mined land could be reclaimed; and most thought air and water pollution would not be a problem--or at least would not bother them. Attitudes on reclamation range from those who believe it is not necessary because either the land is not valuable enough or such a small percentage of it will be torn up that very few people will ever see it to those who feel the land should not be stripped because such disturbed land can never be reclaimed.⁷

Aside from the ranchers, it is the newcomers who express the most concern over environmental problems. One gets the feeling that because the old-time residents hold environmentalists in such low esteem they feel they cannot share any common concerns with them. Some of the older residents blame the environmentalists for the present energy crisis and categorize them as radicals stirring up needless trouble and making unfounded accusations against

⁷The latter view is far more prevalent among ranchers than among townspeople.

industry. In contrast to locals, most newcomers are aware of environmental concerns and point out the lack of such concern they find in Gillette.

In spite of their general laissez-faire attitude toward industrial growth, Gillette townspeople are also experiencing some second thoughts. The previous belief that coal development would be much steadier and more controlled than oil development seems to be giving way to the belief that coal may well produce as many problems or more for the community. In the same sense, whereas a few months ago many people said they thought coal would pay its own way, the researcher now is hearing more and more individuals questioning whether it will or not.

Gillette's nearest neighbor. Buffalo, the largest town in and seat of Johnson County, is situated approximately seventy miles west of Gillette and has about 3,400 residents. Buffalo appears to be a rather conservative community that has seen little change and wants to keep it that way. Largely a retirement community attractive to the wealthy, Buffalo has not undergone the development due to oil that Gillette has; but the city has faced the prospect of growing for the last fifteen years, ever since Reynolds Aluminum Company started purchasing land for

water rights and developing Lake DeSmet.⁸ Townspeople were anticipating the building of a uranium enrichment plant, and for several years residents in the area expected construction to begin at any time and a flood of construction workers to be coming in. Reynolds's plans, however, never materialized; and the company subsequently sold its holdings to Texaco. Now the people of Buffalo are expecting Texaco to announce soon plans to construct a gasification plant and probably some generating plants; hence the spectre of growth and development is present again.

Informants reported that Reynolds had had an extensive public relations program and had bought large amounts of land before the people were generally aware of it. They stated that while there was no organized opposition to the company's proposed development nearly everyone was against it. According to one person interviewed, there was a general feeling in the town of not wanting this kind of industrialization; and certain individuals spoke out against it more strongly than others.

Opposition to coal development that is missing or muted in Campbell County is very strongly voiced in Buffalo.

⁸Reynolds Company acquired almost the whole upper third of the county.

However, two ranchers who were interviewed thought a majority of the ranchers in Johnson County would sell their land to coal companies. Land and ranches here seem to have changed hands much more so than in Campbell and Converse counties.⁹ Reasonably enough, some people in Johnson County are saying that they do not believe development will come now. They have been living with the prospect for so long that all the speculation now seems to be just that, with little chance of it ever materializing.

Some residents of Buffalo seem to be of the opinion that if the city does not expand streets, sewers, and lights development will not happen. Buffalo is a retirement town and the people do not want change; they cannot afford it (to them change means increases in taxes and prices), and they generally believe they will not benefit from it. Also, Johnson County has not as yet experienced any real impact due to coal development. Residents are aware, however, that the time to prepare is short; and in several ways both Buffalo and Douglas, the principal town

⁹Several Johnson County ranchers thought that between 50 and 60 percent of the land had changed hands in the last twenty years. This is partly due to the fact that many ranches along the Big Horn Mountains are bought and sold by Easterners who attempt to build up "show-place" ranches.

in Converse County and that county's seat, have less of a base from which to handle a construction and permanent labor force than does Gillette. Johnson County, however, does have good prospects in regard to planning.

Johnson County has an active planning board and is the only county in the state with a full-time city/county planner. Two years ago the county commissioners proposed some strict county-wide zoning, but the ranchers opposed it so strongly that the commissioners had to table it. However, within the past year the commissioners passed a mobile home and a subdivision zoning regulation with the help of the planning board and there was not a whisper of opposition. The city of Buffalo has some strict zoning, especially with respect to trailers and trailer courts. The planner is currently working on a joint effort with Sheridan and Campbell counties to procure impact assistance funds; neighboring Converse County chose not to take part with them.

Douglas and vicinity. Residents of Douglas, the closest principal city (population approximately 2,800) directly south of Gillette, were also contacted. Most of those interviewed said they were looking forward to a small amount of growth to reverse the trend of the last several years and recognized that time to prepare for

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Population?

development was short. All said, however, that they were neither anxious nor prepared for the influx of people anticipated in the wake of coal development. Douglas is already experiencing the huge increase in land prices that Gillette and Buffalo have had for some time, although the town has not undergone the development due to oil that Gillette has nor yet experienced any but occasionally anticipated social impact due to coal development. Increased oil and uranium activity, plus speculation, are the principal factors to date which have driven up land prices. One Douglas real estate agent interviewed said lots in the city limits had doubled in price in the last four months. Housing is almost impossible to find, and land surrounding the city is too expensive for anyone to start a trailer court.

Land use planning and zoning have been as emotional an issue in Converse County as they have in the rest of the study area. Countywide zoning was turned down two years ago and had some political repercussions.¹⁰ Consequently,

¹⁰The defeat of the zoning proposal caused the Converse County Planning Commission to be dissolved. One of the members of that commission said they had been working closely with DEPAD (Department of Economic Planning and Development) officials when suddenly the head of the agency was fired, priorities changed, and the commission was left high and dry with no more direction. "DEPAD screwed us and I think they have a moral obligation to help [now]," he said.

some informants said the county commissioners would be very hesitant to bring the issue up again. However, it was reported that some ranchers in the northern part of the county, closer to the proposed development, were taking a second look at land use planning and were perhaps recognizing a need for it in order to protect their ranch land.

The city planning board expressed great hope that the companies coming into Converse County would assist with planning and technical assistance, and the board is already working with DEPAD trying to get that agency to provide some planning assistance. All interviewed agreed that, with the exception of the schools (whose officials seemed positive that they could handle almost twice as many elementary students as they have now), Douglas was in no way prepared to handle a large population influx nor could it in the near future without assistance from sources not now available. Most, however, were in favor of a small amount of controlled growth to give the town a vitality that it is now lacking.

City officials said that Douglas was virtually broke and that they were seriously considering unincorporating and putting themselves in the hands of the county, which has a much larger tax base. These informants felt that the county was not willing to help them out and that the city

