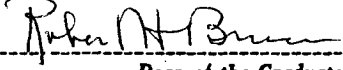


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**COMMUNITY DISEQUILIBRIUM: A
POLITICAL SYSTEM REACTS**

by

Jackson B. Haggard

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Department
of Political Science and the
Graduate School of the University of Wyoming
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The author assumes full responsibility for the failures in the form and substance that may appear in this thesis. I cannot, however, accept full credit for all that might appear to be worthwhile on its pages. My debt to many persons is truly great.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Toward A Definition of Community

In this paper we will be concerned with the problem of how a community responds to a particular issue. Issues sometimes develop into significant controversies in which certain elements of the community oppose one another to the point of political polarization. Our first problem is one of definition of the various concepts to be used.

One of the bases of life among humans today seems to be the attachment to local community regardless of the type of environment in which it exists. This community attachment is not a phenomenon of recent vintage, for as one scholar has stated:

Community life is older than group life; group life is older than social life; and social life is older than man. Like primates today, our ancestors lived in communities, in groups, and had a fairly developed social life even, no doubt, before they became human.

In any case it would appear that for the most part men live in communities and are profoundly influenced by

¹Jessie S. Bernard, American Community Behavior (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), p. 1.

the environment of these communities. In order to proceed with a discussion of a human community, such as the one with which this paper is concerned, the author should give the reader some sort of basic definition of a community.

Since the human community is not a simple or easily definable concept, it is my contention that no simple definition can or will suffice. Some scholars, however, seem to feel that a simple definition will suit their purposes very nicely. For example, Professor Robert Park has stated: "The simplest possible description of a community is this; a collection of people occupying a more or less clearly defined area."² Another definition of community which seems to be a bit too short and not very inclusive is the one given by Kent Jennings: "When we speak of community we shall therefore ordinarily mean geographical-political units, imprecise as these units may be in terms of community as process or function."³ These two concepts while not clearly similar, do contain a thread of similarity in that both mention geographical area when describing a community.

²Robert E. Park, Human Communities (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1952), p. 66.

³M. Kent Jennings, Community Influentials (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1964), p. 2.

Other scholars have differed from Park and Jennings about a community being a geographical area. Professor Ross says: "Community does not necessarily imply a named or bounded area. It is an organization of social life within the areas around distinctive local facilities."⁴ Professor Charles Adrian in giving his definition of the concept of community also sees the community as something other than a more geographical area. He states: "The community, for most purposes, has become a functional concept rather than a geographical one."⁵ Thus while a community may be defined as a particular geographical area, it must also contain some sort of social life. "Social life seems to imply the activities of men in a society, or to be more explicit, it is the quality of interaction, interrelationship, mutuality."⁶

These qualities seem to imply shared values and common interests among the members of a society, which in this case means a community. If one will subscribe to this line of reasoning then a community becomes a geographical area

⁴H. L. Ross, "Local Community: A Survey Approach, American Sociological Review, XII (Winter 1965), p. 335.

⁵Charles R. Adrian, Social Science and Community Action (East Lansing: MSU Press, 1960), p. 3.

⁶Peter L. Berger, Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective (New York: Doubleday, 1967), p. 26.

in which there is some sort of social life based upon common values and interests. However, one must qualify this statement with a clarification of the idea of common interests, and corresponding common relationships. It stands to reason that if people share the same interests they will seek out others who feel the same to develop this feeling of mutuality. This search for 'similar others' will gradually lead men into a vast and complex network of interrelationships within groups to which he will identify and belong. This searching out and joining significant groups in the community begins almost at birth.

One begins life as an individual organism involved in a struggle with other organisms for mere existence. One becomes involved later in personal moral, eventually economic and occupational, and ultimately political associations; in short, with all the forms of association we call social."⁷

If one subscribes to the validity of these precepts, an image of community should begin to take shape. The image of a community which should begin to form is of a geographical area containing several groups of people sharing many common or mutual interests. This sense of mutuality is based upon friendship, reciprocation of some sort, and various social obligations. Murray G. Ross seems to indicate

⁷Park, op. cit., p. 262.

that a definition of a community must also include recognition of its many political elements. According to this concept:

The community in its explicit elements is defined as any consciously organized aggregation of individuals residing in a specified area or locality, endowed with limited political autonomy, supporting such primary institutions as schools and churches and among whom certain degrees of interdependency are recognized. Such a definition includes the village, town, city, and may, without undue strain, include the suburb or city ward.⁸

This definition seems to include most of the ideas of the other scholars and some new ideas as well.

In addition, a human community seems to be characterized by a sort of familial spirit that shall, for lack of a better term, be called a "sense of community". Professor Ritchie Lowry used this term in which he sees one of the characteristics of a small community being: "a strong consciousness of kind which gives rise to a meaningful sense of community and kindred and accounts for a potentially constructive communal awareness of problems and issues."⁹ This sense of community is probably, for the most part, the result of the many common values, beliefs or sentiments held by the majority of the people. These collective sentiments

⁸ Edward E. Lindeman in Murray G. Ross, Case Histories in Community Organization (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 27.

⁹ Ritchie P. Lowry, Who's Running This Town? (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. XXV.

are considered to be good and worthwhile by the majority of people in the community and should be desired by all. Those who entertain identical sentiments will develop a sense of community faster than those who reject the collective values held by their particular identity groups.

It is with these ideas in mind that a fairly composite picture of a community can be drawn. For the purposes of this paper a community shall be defined as a geographical area containing a group or groups of people who have one or more major interests in common and have developed together a sense of identity with the area. It must be stressed that each community is closely interrelated with other similar communities in the society. Modern communities do not operate in a vacuum since they are surrounded by similar communities and linked to them by certain political, social, and economic arrangements which lend a certain cohesiveness to the entire social system. So, in addition to the aforementioned characteristics of a community another point should be added. These geographical areas containing groups of people with community identity do not operate in a vacuum, but by working together form the basis for the entire social system.

Community Issues and Controversies

Since the citizens of a community share common interests and a feeling of mutuality, certain aspects and occurrences in the community situation seem to generate more than the normal amount of response especially among the people most active in community life. One such aspect of community life could be some sort of issue which has come into the relatively placid community environment and initiated a certain amount of concern among the people.

Issues do arise in a community and are spawned by various means. To begin our search for an adequate definition, perhaps a classification of issues is necessary.

Issues in community conflict may be classified according to such substantive criteria as economic, social, and political. But a more fundamental classification is in terms of the relationship between the parties and the relationship to the status quo.¹⁰

This seems to imply that issues concern more than one group or may involve the entire community. The involvement of groups is also mentioned by Banfield and Wilson: "They (issues) arise in response to the maintenance and enhancement needs of large formal organizations."¹¹ Issues then,

¹⁰Bernard, op. cit., p. 84.

¹¹Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 28.

can be either political, social, or economic in nature and tend to involve the various groups of the community.

The content of issues is another important factor to be considered as this may have a profound effect upon community life. In his book on community conflict, James Coleman discusses the content of issues and the area of life which they affect.

A second difference among the incidents which set off community disputes is in the area of life they affect. Three general areas can be roughly distinguished: Economic. Many communities have been split down the middle by economic issues. Economic issues are likely to produce strong response. Power or authority. In the struggle for power, often only a few are affected. The structure of political authority often remains the same, and only those who have something at stake feel their pulses quicken as events lead to a dispute. The third 'area of life' is less easily defined, but may be thought of quite generally as cultural values or beliefs--often conflicting values or philosophies between two deeply felt beliefs.¹²

It seems that throughout his discourse on issues and their content, Professor Coleman stresses the idea that issues, if left unresolved can lead to a split in the community. He is not alone in this belief. "Issues, once they break through social restraints are likely to polarize the community into hostile camps."¹³ "Community issues

¹²James S. Coleman, Community Conflict (New York: Free Press, 1957), p. 5.

¹³Banfield and Wilson, op. cit., p. 26.

often take the form of serious conflict where there is considerable latent frustration with the status quo."¹⁴ Thus it would appear that a serious split in the usual cohesiveness which tends to characterize a community can result from unresolved community issues.

Perhaps, after shedding some light upon the origin of issues, the classification of issues, the content of issues, and the involvement of groups in the community which can be stimulated by issues, it is possible to define an issue well enough to satisfy the needs of this paper. Community issues will be defined as any strong stimuli, which can be either political, economic, or social in origin, to the visible consequences of which various groups within a community will respond.

At times a certain issue will be of sufficient magnitude to initiate a controversy within a community. Professor Coleman has provided a list of criteria which if fulfilled will usually lead to a dispute in a community.

According to this set of circumstances the issue must: touch upon an important aspect of the community members lives; affect the lives of different members differently; and be one on which the community members feel that action can be taken.¹⁵

¹⁴Jennings, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁵Coleman, op. cit., p. 4.

This thesis at least partially explains the concept of the issue as a stimulus which if it fulfills all the criteria will evoke a response. However, one area of concern is unclear in this explanation. What conditions are necessary within a community to allow an issue to develop into a controversy? An examination of a modern small community, such as Cheyenne, Wyoming, about which this paper is prepared, is in order.

In our modern technological society, a small community such as this Wyoming city cannot remain isolated from a rapidly changing America. The impact of mass media and faster transportation is changing the entire picture of small community life from traditional patterns of inter-relationship to more modern ones. A small community which believes itself to be void of urban problems and responsibilities is simply not facing up to the actual problems it faces or it is ignoring them entirely.

Whereas, in the more populous areas of the United States, issues which arose would be considered in the light of the desires and dislikes of the vast array of non-governmental groups, this seems not to be the case in the small community. Herbert Kaufman sees this to be the case in his book on state and local government. He states that:

In many a small community the range of governmental activities is narrow, and the population and economic base are too small and too undifferentiated to sustain a large array of specialized non-governmental groups. Consequently, there are fewer occasions for bargaining in the political arena, and interactions may be personal rather than institutional or collective.¹⁶

If this is the case in a community, issues, if they should arise, could develop into controversies because of the complete, direct, and quite personal participation of the members of the community. This close personal contact and discussion by members of the community is no doubt the result of the fairly homogeneous population found in most small communities. The homogeneous character of a small community is an important consideration for an investigation of the transformation of issue to controversy. In such an atmosphere, it would seem that agreement among the people should be nearly unanimous or disagreement should be nearly unanimous. Professor Charles Hyneman seemed to be hinting at this theory when he wrote:

The homogeneous society can have more of common, national, policy--arrived at by a democratic process and vigorously enforced--than the heterogeneous society can win for itself, for in

¹⁶Herbert Kaufman, Politics in State and Local Governments (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 110.

the homogeneous society there is greater harmony in value holdings, greater concurrence on social goals, greater agreement as to means by which goals may be attained.¹⁷

In any case, in such an environment, issues are very likely to become quite personalized and may tend to disrupt community equilibrium if involvement cannot be avoided.

Floyd Hunter in his work on the power structure of a community identifies an aspect of community life which seems to be essential to communitywide participation in controversy as well as in non-controversies. According to Hunter:

It would be physically impossible for the men of decision to interact with great numbers of citizens on a face-to-face basis.....the contacts with the average citizen must be limited, but there must be channels of interaction open for decisions to flow down, and for issues to rise, at times, from the underlying population.¹⁸

¹⁷Charles S. Hyneman, Conflict, Toleration, and Agreement: Persisting Challenge for a Democratic Government (Urban, Ill.: University of Illinois Bulletin, 1962), p. 4.

¹⁸Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structures (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. 107.

In addition, Professor Park suggests:

There is, however, in human society another fundamental form of interaction or process. This is communication. It is the function of communication, or one of its functions, to bring about those understandings among members of a society which eventually take the form of custom, folkways, and other more intimate and personal forms of solidarity. It is these that enable us to maintain, even in the distractions and confusions of this modern world of ours, the concert, cooperation, and the rapport necessary to effective collective action.¹⁹

Seymour Martin Lipset seems to imply the importance of these organized communications channels in his book, Political Man. "Occupationally determined activities affect the individual's participation in the organized communications network of society, and hence his consciousness of political issues....."²⁰ He seems to imply that the organized communications network of society is essential to an awareness of issues. Karl Deutsch in his book on political communication and control sees the networks of face to face contacts essential for communication.²¹ It seems clear that face to face contact and

¹⁹Park, op., cit., p. 119-120.

²⁰Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 204.

²¹Karl W. Deutsch, The Nerves of Government (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 154.

channels of communication are important elements of a community structure. One important characteristic of a small community seems to be the close proximity of the people of the community to the channels of communication through which the leadership of the community is exercised.

It is possible that this proximity of citizen to citizen and of citizen to channel of communication would aid in the solution of issues before they reach the proportions of a controversy. However, it also seems possible that this close contact could enflame certain issues and create controversies should all conditions for this transition be present.

Another, and not so pleasant result of close face to face contact in the community, is the possibility of overparticipation by citizens who are affected by the outcome of a community issue. Overparticipation by the citizens could result from this close proximity to the channels of communication and be characterized by boundless enthusiasm and energy. However, it could be more likely the result of close personal contact or intimate access to group leaders. In any event, overparticipation in community affairs on the part of many citizens should an issue arise, could result in feelings of disappointment by many if things seemed not to be going exactly as they or their group would wish. This in itself, providing that enough people expressed feelings

of disappointment, could turn the issue into a controversy initiated by the wrong people getting their feelings hurt. The distinct possibility exists that if people were to be disappointed often enough and seriously enough, individual feelings of alienation toward the community and the issues could result.

As a feeling of powerlessness, alienation refers to the expectancy or probability held by an individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcome he seeks. As meaninglessness, alienation refers to the lack of clarity in what one ought to believe; the alienated individual has no established and stable expectancies on which to predict the outcomes of behavior. Alienation in the third sense, is based upon the feeling that socially unapproved behavior is required to achieve given goals. As isolation, alienation refers to the acceptance of values out of accord with those of a given society.²²

Professor Lane is concerned with political alienation and its causes.

Political alienation, we have said, is the tendency to think of the government and politics of the nation as run by others for others according to an unfair set of rules. The politically alienated man is aware of the alternatives and grieves over his losses. The most reasonable inference is that political alienation is but a symptom of a more general personal alienation, a concept to which many have contributed.²³

²²Bernard, op. cit., p. 19.

²³Robert C. Lane, Political Ideology (New York: Free Press, 1962), p. 177.

Thus, the conditions within communities may be ripe for the development of an issue into a controversy and all that is needed is the right type of stimulus. This transformation of issues to controversy is not a simple matter. Professor Coleman has traced the development of an issue into a controversy using seven stages.²⁴

- 1) The initial single issue.
- 2) The equilibrium of the community is disrupted.
- 3) This disruption allows previously suppressed issues against the opponent to appear.
- 4) As this happens, more and more opponents and beliefs enter into the disagreement.
- 5) The opponent is made to appear totally evil.
- 6) Charges are made (often unsubstantiated) against the opponent.
- 7) The dispute has become totally independent of the initial disagreement.

If an issue reaches the final stage of development given by Coleman, it may cause a response on the part of the entire community. As the issue reaches the intensity of a full controversy, the social structure of the community reacts to the situation.

The community seems to separate itself into two clusters, each holding to a different philosophy concerning the

²⁴Coleman, op. cit., p. 11.

controversy. This is followed by the formation of ad hoc groups with new leaders (usually extremist) around each of the opposing power centers. "It has been repeatedly shown that social activity and particularly membership in community organizations is strongly linked to political participation."²⁵ Both the new groups and leaders usually occupy extreme positions on the issues.

In addition to these ad hoc groups, the formal community organizations are drawn, some quite unwillingly, into the dispute. However, more often than not, these formal organizations are concerned with the maintenance and protection of their vested interests. If the leaders of these organizations see some advantage to be gained for them out of the controversy, they might propose changes. Other organizations may see no advantage to be gained for them and thus oppose any changes in the community aimed at eliminating the controversy. Civic factionalism can do nothing but intensify the controversy and the polarization of the community into opposing camps. Community polarization is recognized by Professor William D'Antonio in his study of power and democracy. He states: "The significant change

²⁵R. D. Putnam, "Political Attitudes and the Local Community", American Political Science Review, LX (Spring 1966), p. 653.

in our time is that we are witnessing a conscious struggle by men representing various institutional sectors for control of the political power-center."²⁶

If and when an issue becomes a full blown controversy, to resolve the dispute becomes increasingly difficult. The difficulty seems to lie in the democratic system upon which our entire political process is based. For example, if the disagreement was confined to a struggle between contending groups, the solution would come with the elimination from contention of one or more of the contending groups. Elimination is a rather strong term and seems to overstate the solution.

Group elimination is not acceptable in a democratic system which, by its very nature, must rely upon less destructive means to solve complex problems. In a democratic society, the citizens have delegated the authority to solve complex problems to a selected group of elites who are known as decision-makers. The decisions of these few elites in a democratic society require voluntary adherence.

It follows that a spirit of toleration must have a high priority in the goals of a democratic society. Those who hold authority in a democratic government must constantly strive for policies and

²⁶William V. D'Antonio and Howard J. Ehrlich, Power and Democracy in America (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961), p. 141.

procedures that invite men to reduce their pressure for personal advantage in order that other men may share in the general allocation of advantages.²⁷

Thus, those in authority cannot abuse this power any more than should those over whom they exercise authority forego the public interest in order to secure personal advantage.

A modern political society has endowed these elites not only with the power to make decisions, but with an equally important power to legitimize these decisions after they have been made. This is necessary because our democratic process dictates that decisions should be made by those who will be most affected by them. Ideally, community decisions should be made by the local community units which are closely intermeshed with the welfare of the community. However, in a modern political society such democratic ideals are not always practical.

A sociologist, Professor Roland L. Warren has given us an important insight into the very perplexing problem of democratic philosophy vs. practical necessity in the area of community decision-making. He contends that three questions have appeared concerning decision-making and practical necessity.

²⁷Hyneman, op. cit., p. 4.

First, the question of delegation which involves the necessity of having some decisions made by people who, for one reason or another, have been especially designated to make them. Second, there is the question of relevance which requires that certain types of decisions, especially those which require special knowledge, are appropriately confined to those bodies possessing special knowledge. Third, the prerogative question inquires as to whether or not some people in the system have a greater claim to a voice in the decisions of a particular unit than do others.²⁸

In the present society, the emphasis seems to be placed on efficiency and practicality with a corresponding decline in reliance upon democratic philosophy. However, to say that conflict resolution has come to rely upon decision-making which follows, in spirit at least, the democratic philosophy, seems not to be such a wrong idea.

Charles Adrian also gives a definition of decision-making that seems to suffice quite nicely for the purposes of this paper. "This concept of decision-making involves the selection of ideas which seem to fit the needs of a current want of the existing value structure."²⁹ This definition includes references to both the efficiency concept and the democratic concept. At the local community level the activities of decision-makers in the resolution of disputes is no less important than decision-making at the national or international level.

²⁸Roland L. Warren, The Community in America (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), p. 3.

²⁹Adrian, op. cit., p. 2.

Decision-makers have the task to enact social policies which affect the lives and sensitivities of the public. Local decision-makers are very often the ones who are called upon to make decisions which most directly and intimately affect the lives of the people.³⁰

Thus, issue controversy is resolved in a local community through the democratic process of decision-making which restricts the activities of the decision-makers to those of the public interest and restricts the activities of those whom the decisions will affect to abide by them or use the democratic process to alter the situation. This important decision-making process is characterized by the necessity for choosing between alternative solutions to problems affecting one significant group or a series of significant groups within a society.

The key for effective decision-making seems to be competence, both personal and technical. It seems correct to say that such competence can result from group participation in the selection between alternative courses of action. Group participation tends to maximize the contribution of each individual member. It would appear that the decision-making leadership elite owes its status, in part, to membership in the significant groups of the community.

³⁰R. S. Sigel, "Urban Community Leaders Knowledge of Public Opinion", Western Political Quarterly XVIII (Dec. 1965), p. 881.

This political situation will probably continue so long as no single leadership elite achieves complete domination. Professor Clyde J. Wingfield sees such domination as unlikely because: "Community political systems are likely to be polythetic in which a number of leadership elites are identified as potentially sovereign in their respective bailiwicks but with limited influence in other provinces. In other words, a system of reciprocity."³¹

Some Concepts in Review

In order to remove any confusion about the character of the political entity about which I am writing, a review of important concepts seems to be in order. Within this community there exists a sense of familial spirit called, for the lack of a better term, community spirit. A characteristic of this aspect of community life is the sharing of common interests and a feeling of mutuality among the members. Common interests are often brought into clear focus by some sort of issue which could disrupt the otherwise placid environment of the community.

³¹Clyde J. Wingfield, "Attitudes and Action: The Politics of Influence", Public Administration Review XXII (Winter, 1962), p. 41.

Community issues have been defined as to their origin, classification, content, and the areas of life which they affect. If these issues are left unresolved, they can often lead to a serious split in a community as the various interest groups respond with vigor when their vested interests are threatened.

The controversies which can result from unresolved issues will disrupt the community to an extent which is dependent upon certain conditions within the community. If these conditions are present the issue can develop in several very neat stages into quite a serious threat to community stability.

Community response may result in many changes in the social structure of the community. The most important and serious response of a community to a serious controversy seems to be the polarization of the groups in the community into two opposing camps. Solution of the problem is difficult, but not impossible, as the democratic process has provided for decision-makers whose function it is to alleviate conflict by choosing between alternative solutions.

If, however, the local decision-makers are unable or unwilling to make the necessary decision to alleviate the controversy and heal the polarized community, the decision will have to be made by some sort of outside decision-making

body which is also recognized as legitimate by the members of the community. To take the decision-making power from local elites is a serious matter and should not be assumed unless there appears to be no other way to solve the crisis. Such an assumption of power by an outside group could adversely affect the stability of the community which may not be able to effectively resist such an erosion of its prerogatives.

Thus, it appears quite possible that a situation could arise in which a single issue facing a community develops into a serious controversy. If the controversy was serious enough to cause the community to polarize into two opposing groups community stability would be visibly shaken. A decision could solve the crisis and re-unite the community, but because of certain conflicting interests between the groups of the community, the local decision-makers are unable to make the required decision and make it legitimate. This situation will probable necessitate the entry into the dispute of another group of decision-makers who will be forced into making a decision which will injure the vested interests of one of the opposing camps and perhaps increase the hostility and opposition of this offended group to both community and outside decision-makers.

Approach and Methodology

Admitting that such a situation does exist in a community is a simple matter and requires no great amount of original thought. However, to describe the actual transformation from issue to controversy, the resultant polarization, and the disruption of community stability in a manner which will illuminate the seriousness of the situation is no easy task from the standpoint of an adequate approach and appropriate methodology. The purpose of this thesis is to relate to the reader an actual situation in which the stability of a community was shaken by a serious controversy. The initial single issue had intensified into a controversy because the local means for re-establishing the equilibrium of the community were inadequate. Such a situation seemed to exist in Cheyenne, Wyoming, during the final stages of the completion of the interstate highway system around the city. First to be considered was the selection of an adequate approach to investigate the situation.

Perhaps Professor Wingfield has given some insight into such an approach to relate the seriousness of a situation of this sort. In his discussion of leadership elites, he referred to a "community political system".³² If a commun-

³²Wingfield, op. cit., p. 41.

ity is indeed a political system then perhaps through the use of general systems theory a study of a community under stress can be accomplished. According to Professor Scott: "If a key exists which will unlock the mysteries of human behavior, it will be in the form of a theory of systems."³³

A General Theory of Systems As An Approach

A general theory of systems uses certain concepts to gain some sort of understanding about a wide range of phenomena in the physical sciences and the behavioral sciences. Therefore, it would seem that to use this approach would be acceptable for the purposes of this paper, if it could be demonstrated that a community of the sort under investigation was indeed a system. However, the initial step in this process is the adequate definition of a system.

The concept of a 'system' is highly ambiguous and the boundaries of the concept are nearly impossible to define. "The word 'system' is used very broadly to mean any set of interacting parts producing results different from or

³³William G. Scott, Organizational Theory: A Behavioral Analysis for Management (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1967), p. 120.

greater than those produced by any smaller group of parts."³⁴ Another definition adds still more to the concept. "A system is an assembly of interdependent parts (subsystems) whose interaction determines its survival. Interdependence means that a change in one part affects other parts and thus the whole system."³⁵ For the purposes of this thesis, a system will be defined as an overall pattern of relationships among discrete component parts whose interaction determines the very survival of the system. It now seems fitting to see if a community can correctly be investigated as a system.

Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball may have shed a bit of light upon a possible approach to a study of this sort. "Our own approach will start with the notion of community as a master system encompassing social forms and cultural behavior in interdependent subsidiary systems."³⁶ They go on to propose "that community should be viewed as systems comprising interactional regularities and cultural behavior in an environmental context."³⁷ Other scholars

³⁴I.C.M.A., Introduction to Systems Analysis (Washington, D.C.: Management Information Service, 1968), p. 1.

³⁵Douglas McGregor, The Professional Manager (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 39-40.

³⁶Conrad M. Arensberg and Solon T. Kimball, Culture and Community (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965), p.3.

³⁷Ibid., p. 4.

have also seen the community as a system. For example, Morris Janowitz states in Community Political Systems:

In these research studies, the community is thought to be a social system, rooted in geography, which directly supplies its members with the major portion of their daily sustenance needs. The community can be conceptualized as an independent decision-making system.³⁸

A community, if it meets certain criteria, could be considered a political system. These necessary criteria are included in several definitions of a political system. Robert E. Lane presents an interesting definition of a political system in his book on political behavior in America:

At an early stage of the argument presented in this book, we said that the term 'politics' refers to the selection of rulers for a society and the allocation of rewards and penalties by these rulers. The political system, then, refers to the systematic organized ways in which these are done. Certain features of this system have a persistent interest for mankind: they are the features freighted with consequences for public order. These features are: (1) the stability of the political system, (2) its responsiveness both to expressed pressures and to social change, (3) the openness of the system, that is, its capacity to tolerate and use heterogeneity, and (4) the justice of the system, the evaluation of who gets what.³⁹

Charles Adrian adds to this concept by describing a democratic political system.

³⁸ Morris Janowitz, ed., Community Political Systems (Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1961), p. 15.

³⁹ Lane, op. cit., p. 439-440.

In addition to being accorded legitimacy and a set of consensual goals, a political system must, if it is to be democratic, be one in which people feel secure in the possession of a psychological sense of having access to the decision-makers and of having decision-makers who are representative of their interests and protective of their preferred life styles.⁴⁰

Arensberg and Kimball, while not mentioning political system directly, indicate:

Thus a system is composed of a number of individuals united by ordered relations, existing in time and space, each individual responding in a customary manner towards others within the system (or outsiders or events which impinge on the system), the nature of interaction (ordered relations and custom) being an expression of the values affected by the situation or event which stimulated the response.⁴¹

Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, in their discussion of developing nations, gave students of political behavior a classic definition of a political system. While the definition was intended to apply to the study of comparative politics, it might apply equally as well to the study of community systems.

All political systems have some type of structure which may perform many different functions. The same functions are found in different systems but the difference lies in the frequency of the exercise of power and the degree of the exercise of power. All systems are multifunctional as well.⁴²

⁴⁰ Charles R. Adrian, "Public Attitudes and Metropolitan Decision Making", in Thomas R. Dye and Grett W. Hawkins, eds., Politics in the Metropolis (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Books, 1967), p. 458.

⁴¹ Arensberg and Kimball, op. cit., p. 270.

⁴² Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., The Politics of Developing Areas (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 1-62.

It would appear that a community can be visualized as a political system and the use of systems theory may be justified in order to illuminate the seriousness of the polarization of the significant groups of the community which disrupts the equilibrium of the system. If a system depends upon the interaction of its component units for its very survival, then a community must depend upon the interaction of its significant groups for survival. A community which is subjected to the sort of controversy which will result in the disruption of its component parts is in danger of irreparable damage being done to the overall pattern of relationships which is necessary for community equilibrium. A system will react to stress in order to maintain its equilibrium and insure its survival.

Perhaps David Easton's model of a political system will give us the essential elements. It begins with two propositions:

First, there is an enormous variety of influences coming from the environment of a political system capable of disturbing the way in which the system performs its tasks. Second, these influences are there whether the environment is relatively stable or fluctuating wildly.⁴³

⁴³David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1965), p. 108.

Environmental events which cause some modification or alteration within the system are known as inputs to the system. "Inputs will serve as summary variables that concentrate and reflect everything in the environment which is relevant to political stress."⁴⁴ Examples of input would be demands of the citizens, supports by the citizens, and apathy or alienation on the part of the citizens.

Stress is communicated to a system via the inputs and the system must respond to endure. The system responds to the inputs by a series of exchanges between itself and the environment (i.e. outputs).

We are able to see them as transactions moving from the system itself to its environment. The term will not be used to summate all events that take place in a system. It will be confined to those kinds of occurrences already described as authoritarian allocations of values or binding decisions and the actions implementing and related to them⁴⁵

These decisions or actions could take the form of deprivations or rewards by the system.

The model does not end here as the system needs some sort of mechanism by which it can inform the authorities about their outputs and the need for further or reduced action. This capacity of a system to inform itself is known as 'feedback'.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 113.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 126.

In general terms, the capacity of a system to respond to stress will derive from two central processes found within it. Information about the state of the system and its environment can be communicated back to the authorities; through their actions the system is able to act so as to attempt to change or maintain any given condition in which the system may find itself. That is to say, a political system is endowed with feedback and the capacity to respond to it.⁴⁶

Thus the community system can be disturbed by various environmental influences which disturb the overall pattern of relationships. These environmental inputs communicate stress to the system which responds with outputs which are attempts by the system to retain the viable relations between the discrete, but compatible component units. Feedback is merely the method by which the community can inform itself of the progress being made toward the eventual return to self-regulation.

If the system is subjected to inputs in the form of demands and support, and responds with outputs in the forms of deprivations and rewards, the chances are that it is an open system. If the system is a human community, the chances are that it also is an organic system. An organic system is one in which the system is also very dynamic as these changes are constant so long as the process of interaction is viable. A system which is open, organic, and dynamic, such as a human

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 128.

community, tends to naturally assume a position which neutralizes stress while maintaining the status quo. This implies that the system seeks to maintain equilibrium. "Equilibrium refers to a state of adjustment between opposing forces. It also describes a tendency of a system to move toward a condition where the forces or influences in it are resolved."⁴⁷ Thus it seems correct to say that a system will, if it is open, organic, and dynamic, follow a natural tendency to assure the effective interaction between its component parts in order to achieve equilibrium and insure its survival.

The Case Study As a Method

In order to achieve an adequate picture of such a political system, it seems desirable to select an investigative method which will allow the introduction of a problem of decision in a specific community situation. The investigative method which seems to lend itself best to a study of this sort is the case study method. The case study method will be used to investigate the specific community situation in Cheyenne, Wyoming, during the controversy which centered around the highway location.

⁴⁷Scott, op. cit., p. 236.

As explained by Edwin A. Bock: "Depiction of some sort of reality is the purpose of a case study, whatever its focus or shape. Yet, although care may be taken to make cases complete and accurate, no case may achieve perfection."⁴⁸ In other words, case studies should provide the student of American politics and institutions with the required realistic concepts, theories, and generalizations in order that he may complete the total picture of a system.

If one decides upon the use of the case study approach to a study of a community decision system, he should keep firmly in mind that in order to maintain a true perspective of what is happening, it is necessary to maintain the status of an impartial observer. Complete detachment and non-involvement with the controversy is difficult to achieve as the socialization process is quite thorough in the implementation of values. Generalizations about tendencies require both dispassionate analysis and critical judgment which would be impaired if the reporter allowed himself to indulge in the controversy itself.

The case study method of investigation is quite limited in some aspects which affect its usefulness to the student. After a close examination and impartial relation of the

⁴⁸ Edwin A. Bock, Case Studies in American Government (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. viii.

events in an actual instance, there may still be only room for theoretical concepts to be checked. There is also the factor of human error as related by Dr. Bock.

Yet, although care may be taken to make cases complete and accurate, no case can achieve perfection. No case writer can know everything about a particular process. Memories are faulty, motivations are not entirely conscious, and sometimes the writer must depend on an unrepresentative document that happens to be the only source available to cover a point in a case.⁴⁹

In sum, the case study method has, in spite of its many inherent weaknesses, been adopted by many scholars in order to bring to light issues which from the standpoint of decision-making seem to be very important.

Teachers have found that cases serving a variety of purposes, may be used to raise questions of values, of substance, of theory, of expediency, and of 'what is it'. They indicate the milieu and conflict out of which compromises grow and present policy issues in the context in which they appear to those who have to deal with them.⁵⁰

Hypothesis

Therefore, in order to assess the impact of a serious community controversy upon an actual political system it seems necessary to assume that this community political system is in equilibrium so long as the component groups

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

are interacting efficiently. The extent of the impact of a serious community controversy is dependent upon the extent of disequilibrium which is usually characterized by the polarization of the component groups.

It would appear that such a political situation follows a rather distinct pattern. In the beginning the system was in equilibrium with all component parts interacting. A stress was introduced into the system by the development of an issue into a controversy and causing the system to develop the symptoms of disequilibrium. The disequilibrium is characterized by unit polarization and the system struggles to return to the normal state of equilibrium. It is possible that through the help of an alien system the controversy is settled and the equilibrium of the system restored.

To apply this pattern to an actual political situation which contained nearly all of the characteristics of just such a model is the methodology to be used to substantiate the contention that disequilibrium is the natural reaction of a community when it is subjected to a serious controversy. If one is able to investigate an actual political situation in which a reasonably stable community system was subjected to stress which resulted in a disruption of its component units, then it may be possible to contend that political polarization is a symptom of community disequilibrium.

Community disequilibrium is a serious threat to the natural interaction of a political system which will quite naturally attempt to heal the breach within the system and return to the more normal state of equilibrium.

CHAPTER II

PREFACE TO THE DECISION

Intergovernmental Cooperation

"The American form of government is often, but erroneously, symbolized by a three-layer cake. A far more accurate image is the rainbow or marble cake, characterized by an inseparable mingling of differently colored ingredients, the colors appearing in vertical and diagonal strands and unexpected whirls. As colors are mixed in the marble cake, so functions are mixed in the American federal system"¹

It should be an obvious conclusion to any student of the American system of government, that the simple three-tiered structure envisioned by Madison and the other founding fathers was probably quite adequate for their times. To simply assign both the responsibility for the proper execution of a governmental function and the necessary financial support from an available tax source to one of the levels of the new government was the prevailing method used to assign jurisdiction. This more or less specific assignment of functions to each level of government by the

¹Morton Grodzins in W. Brooks Graves American Intergovernmental Relations, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 817.

constitution has been supplemented, not replaced as some writers would have us believe, by a more cooperative relationship between the three levels which have emerged as integral parts of our system of government.

There can be no disputing the obvious shift in the balance of power in the direction of a national pre-eminence. A rather simple explanation for this phenomena is the tremendous demand for all types of services that American citizens have come to expect from their governments. This ever increasing demand for more and varied services has placed a staggering fiscal burden upon the states and their subdivisions. As a result, both the state and local governments in America have taken on more and more political and administrative responsibility to meet the increasing load of providing their citizens with more and better services. It must be noted that these problems which the states and localities are struggling with are by no means the sole burden of these levels of government. The goal of providing services to the American people, in part because of urbanization and industrialization, has become a concern of all three levels of our government. The problems confronting government in America today require a massive planning effort to coordinate governmental efforts aimed at their solution. The new ideas and

incentives along with new funds often come from the national government as the programs are of such a scope that local and state governments are unable or unwilling to provide solutions. It seems clear, that more often than not, the states and their subdivisions are unable to solve the problems rather than unwilling to provide adequate solutions, as this level is the closest to the people and much more the target of citizen frustration.

The key word in the identification and solution of citizen problems by the governments of the United States still remains 'cooperation'. Cooperation on a massive scale is necessary to solve the many problems through the implementation and administration of the many broad social and economic programs aimed at the solution of these ills in our society. Professors Dvorin and Misner have clarified this concept of cooperation between all levels of American government:

Intergovernmental cooperation is neither new nor unique to contemporary American society. It has deep historical roots and represents a departure only to the extent that new techniques are being utilized. The ability of the national government to tax income has placed it in a position of fiscal leadership in intergovernmental affairs. At the same time, both state and local governments have major responsibilities for a wide range of intergovernmental programs.²

²Eugene P. Dvorin and Arthur J. Misner, Government in American Society (Menlo Park, Calif.: Addison-Wesley, 1968), p. 76.

This cooperation between the various levels of our government seems to be one outstanding characteristic of the American political system. The national or central government of the United States is to be sure strong, viable, and independent. In addition, the state governments are to some degree strong and independent. The necessary system of cooperation between the units would be virtually impossible without the constitutional maintenance of this national system fortified by the existence of strong subnational units. While not directly mentioned in the constitution, local units of government have also become strong and important members of the American system of government. Partly because of their size, but more importantly because of their close proximity to the electorate, local units of government are very much a part of the intergovernmental cooperation concept for the solution of governmental problems. Thus, the system of cooperative programming concerns all levels of the American system of governments.

Federal Highway Programs

There are many examples of governmental programs which are carried on through intergovernmental cooperation. Certain functional areas such as agriculture, education, social wel-

fare, veterans benefits, and highways are but a few of the more important functional areas which contain programs involving the cooperation of all levels of government. This paper will be primarily concerned with one of these programs in terms of its impact upon one specific location. Of course, many factors will enter the picture as determinants of the extent of the impact of a highway program upon a given area. However, if the area contains a great many economic and social groups which are greatly concerned with highways and may even draw their very existence from the fruits of highway users, then highway programs will have a very great impact indeed.

To understand the importance of federal highway programs to local areas, it seems necessary to introduce some of the more important aspects of the history of the involvement of all levels of government in the location, construction, and maintenance of highways and roads. Transportation in frontier America was primarily by water and so the need for good roads did not come into prominence until the 19th century. Even though good roads became vital to the growth and development of the nation, the building and maintaining of highways was viewed as strictly a local matter. Early law and custom dictated that all able-bodied men should give a few days each month for the provision of the much needed

roads in and around their towns. Law and custom were replaced by tax regulations for the purpose of building and maintaining roads as the need for more proficient labor and specialized equipment grew with the demand for more and better roads. Communities grew and multiplied along with the advent of the stagecoach and other forms of more speedy and efficient transportation. Perhaps the most important impetus for the construction and maintenance of better roads and highways was the mass-produced automobile. Henry Ford and his famous 'Model T' revolutionized the entire concept of travel for millions of Americans. The automobile became an important means of transportation instead of a luxury to be enjoyed only by the affluent. Thus, modern highways are a product of the twentieth century and only one of the demands placed upon our governmental units.

Congress, perhaps influenced by increasing demands from motorists for smooth hard-surfaced roads, or bolstered by the passage of the sixteenth amendment to the United States Constitution, enacted several grant-in-aid programs which were to have far reaching consequences. One of these new programs was the First Federal Aid Highway Act of 1916 which was: "An act to provide that the United States shall aid the states in the construction of rural post roads, and for

other purposes".³ The importance of highways to the country had reached the stage of national concern. President Woodrow Wilson attests to this importance in a letter written to a committee chairman in Congress.

This measure will conduce to the establishment of more effective highway machinery in each state, strongly influence the development of good road building along right lines, stimulate larger production and better marketing, promote a fuller and more attractive rural life, add greatly to the convenience and economic welfare of all the people, and strengthen the national foundations.⁴

From this moment on, the construction of rural post roads was to be the concern of both the several state highway departments and the Secretary of Agriculture. The act stated:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to cooperate with the states, through their respective State highway departments, in the construction of rural post roads...⁵

In order to receive this federal aid for their highways, each state was required to assent to the provisions of

³U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Selected Laws Relating to Federal Aid in Construction of Roads, 1912-1954 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1954), p. 3.

⁴U.S. Congress, Congressional Record, 64th Congress, 1st Session (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916), pp. 1762-63.

⁵U.S. Congress, An Act to Provide That the United States Shall Aid the States in the Construction of Rural Post Roads, 64th Congress, 1st Session, H.R. 7617, Sec. 1.

this act en toto. "No money apportioned under this act to any State shall be expended therein until its legislature shall have assented to the provisions of this act. The assent of the governor of the State shall be sufficient."⁶ Under the conditions of this important piece of legislation, each state was required to establish some sort of highway department:

The term 'State Highway Department' shall be construed to include any department of another name, or commission, or official or officials, of a State empowered, under its laws, to exercise the functions ordinarily exercised by a State highway department.⁷

The formula for appropriation of funds was based upon three criteria; the areas of the state, the population of the state, and the mileage of rural delivery and star routes in each state relative to the national total mileage for such routes.

One third in the ratio which the area of each state bears to the total area of all the states, as shown by the latest available Federal census; one-third in the ratio which the mileage of rural delivery routes and star routes in each State bears to the total mileage of rural delivery routes in all the States.⁸

⁶Ibid., Sec. 1

⁷Ibid., Sec. 4

⁸Ibid.

The responsibility for the actual planning, surveying, estimating, and constructing of the highway projects was left up to the various state highway departments. However, their recommendations and construction projects were subject to approval by the Secretary of Agriculture. "The Secretary of Agriculture shall approve only such projects as may be substantial in character and the expenditure of funds hereby authorized shall be applied only to such improvements."⁹ The maintenance of the highways was to be the responsibility of the states after their completion had been realized. Section 7 of the Act provided that: "To maintain the roads constructed under the provisions of this Act shall be the duty of the States, or their civil subdivisions, according to the laws of the several states."¹⁰ It is clear that the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 was the turning point in the construction of our nation's highways.

From the time of the Highway Act of 1916 to the latter part of World War II, the federal highway program was gradually expanded to include not only rural post roads but through highways, secondary and feeder roads, the roads through our national forests and parks, and even includes

⁹Ibid, Sec. 6.

¹⁰Ibid., Sec. 7.

roads in urban areas. The same sort of demands for good roads are emanating from the urban areas of our nation that were emanating from the rural areas not so long ago. "Cities today have little choice in the matter. They must depend heavily upon the federal and state funds to meet their expressway and road construction needs."¹¹ However, the primary through express highways were not really stressed by the national government until 1944.

In the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944,¹² there is a section which specifically mentions the interstate highway system. This section, among other things, states that:

There shall be designated within the continental United States a National System of Interstate Highways not exceeding forty thousand miles in total extent so located as to connect by routes, as direct as practicable, the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers, to serve the national defense, and to connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance in the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Mexico. The routes of the National System of Interstate Highways shall be selected by joint action of the State highway departments of each State and the adjoining states for the selection of the Federal Aid System.¹³

¹¹John C. Bollens and Henry J. Schmandt. The Metropolis: Its People, Politics, and Economic Life. (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 290.

¹²U. S. Congress, An Act to Create a National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, 78th Congress, 1st Session, PL, 521.

¹³Ibid., Sec. 7.

Thus, in 1944, the system of interstate express highways came into being.

Prior to 1954, the national government had paid only 50% of the total cost of the interstate highway system. The remaining 50% was met by the respective states. However, this situation was to be changed in 1954 with the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1954, in which the federal share of the interstate system was revised:

That the Federal share payable on account of any project on the national system of interstate highways provided for by funds made available under the provisions of this section shall be increased to 60 per centum of the total cost thereof, plus a percentage of the remaining 40 per centum of such cost in any state containing unappropriated and unreserved public lands and non-taxable Indian lands, individual and tribal, exceeding 5 per centum of the total area of all lands therein, equal to the percentage that the area of lands in such state is of its total area.¹⁴

The activity of the national government seemed to be on the increase in the road building function of government.

Another legislative milestone in the development of the interstate highway system came in 1956. Congress amended and supplemented the Federal Aid Road Act of 1944 by providing for a national system of Interstate and Defense Highways. It is stated in this act that:

¹⁴U.S. Congress, An Act to Supplement and Amend the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1916, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, H.R. 812, Sec. 2(a).

It is hereby declared to be essential to the national interest to provide for the early completion of the 'National System of Interstate Highways', as authorized and designated in accordance with Section 7 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944. It is the intent of the Congress that the Interstate System be completed as nearly as practicable over a thirteen-year period and that the entire System in all the States be brought to simultaneous completion.¹⁵

Section 108 raised the federal share from a 60/40 ratio to a 90/10 ratio.

The federal share payable on account of any project on the Interstate System provided for by funds made available under the provisions of this section shall be increased to 90 per centum of the total cost thereof, plus a percentage of the remaining 10 per centum of such cost in any State containing unappropriated and unreserved public lands and nontaxable Indian land. Provided, that such Federal share payable on any project in any State shall not exceed 95 per centum of the total cost of such project.¹⁶

In addition to raising the Federal share from 60 per centum to what could amount to 95 per centum, this act gave the national government a great deal of power over the acquisition of rights-of-way. According to Sec. 109 (a) of the Act, if a state is unable to secure a necessary right-of-way for an interstate program:

¹⁵U.S. Congress, An Act to Supplement and Amend the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944, 84th Congress, 1st Session, PL 627, Sec. 108(a).

¹⁶Ibid., Sec. 108(e).

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized, in the name of the United States and prior to the approval of title by the Attorney General, to enter upon, and take possession of such lands or interests in lands by purchase, donation, condemnation, or otherwise in accordance with the laws of the United States.¹⁷

This seems to give the power of eminent domain for the interstate highway system to the Secretary of Commerce. This act also provided for increased levies upon diesel fuel, gasoline, motor vehicle taxes, and excise taxes to help defray the anticipated increase in costs of the interstate system.¹⁸ Such taxes and levies have been increasing at a steady rate since 1954 as the interstate system nears completion. Perhaps this increased allocation of funds is facilitated by the process in which the funds are collected and distributed without affecting the annual federal budget submitted to congress annually.

The federal government which pays 90 per cent of the cost (though the states do all the spending), turns over the receipts from certain taxes, chiefly from that on motor fuels, to a Highway Trust Fund. From this, money is allocated each year to the states but, under the so-called Byrd Amendment only to the extent that funds are actually available. The whole operation was arranged to be completely independent of the federal budget.¹⁹

State spending of the money from the Highway Trust Fund is usually administered by a state highway department.

¹⁷ Ibid., Sec. 109(a).

¹⁸ Ibid., Sec. 202-204.

¹⁹ _____, "Conservative at the Wheel", Economist 198: March 11, 1961, p. 955.

The Wyoming Highway System

Highway construction was a state concern long before it became a matter for national attention. However, the amount of concern was largely dependent upon the particular state and its own characteristic problems. It stands to reason that a state with more communities linked to rural areas would be much more concerned with the development of better roads and highways. This concern for the building and maintaining of good roads and highways seemed to be a bit late in arriving in Wyoming. A brief account of the development of Wyoming highways in general and the Wyoming Highway Department in particular seems to be in order.

Until about 1916 the highway system in Wyoming was practically nonexistent. Roads in Wyoming up to that time consisted for the most part of cow and sheep trails, stage coach routes, and military trails. The thought that seemed to be uppermost in the minds of the first pioneer trail makers was to reach good camping grounds and water holes. These early pioneer trails circled marshes, encircled hills, and sought the open places around or through the forests. Many of these early trails were later to become the locations of the main thoroughfares for commerce between the larger villages and towns. These early roads came under the

jurisdiction of the county authorities with no central organization in control.

In 1911 the Wyoming state legislature seemed to recognize the necessity for adopting a definite state highway system by designating seven roads as state highways. These new highways were to be improved under the plans and specifications drawn up by the state engineer. The actual construction of these highways after the plans had been prepared was to be of a completely different nature than the construction of the existing highway system. They were to be built by convict labor supplied by the State Commission of Prison Labor, and financed by the individual counties through which these highways ran. However, the use of convict labor ceased after the creation of the state highway commission.

The Wyoming Highway Department

The Wyoming Highway Department was established by an act of the legislature in 1917 in accordance with the First Federal Aid Highway Act of 1916. Since the first highway department had very little with which to work in the way of roads their first responsibility was to meet with the previous administrators of the Wyoming highway system, the county commissioners.

Five commissioners appointed by Governor John B. Kendrick were to confer with Boards of County Commissioners to explain the operation of the State Highway Act, which created the Department and gave the Commission, Engineer, and other employees authority to build the state highway system.²⁰

At the outset the new highway department was faced with some rather unique problems which probably resulted from the relatively new experience of building highways on a state-wide scale.

The principal and most embarrassing problem confronting the Department was lack of finances--not even an initial appropriation had been provided. State legislators had apparently assumed road construction would be financed by county and federal funds. However, most county commissioners were not willing to pay even half of the cost of building and completing even an earthen road.²¹

This problem, along with many others, needed to be solved before the construction of a truly state-wide highway system could begin.

In the act of the 14th Wyoming Legislature creating the highway department, the state highway engineer was given permission to appoint one stenographer and one map-maker. From that modest beginning the department has grown into a bureaucracy of nearly 1850 employees, 1450 of which are college trained. The department is now quite specialized

²⁰Wyoming, Biennial Report, Wyoming Highway Department (1917-1918), p. 1.

²¹Ibid.

with eleven sections each of which is concerned with some aspect of the overall road building function.²² Another indication of the size and importance of the highway department in Wyoming is its somewhat autonomous existence in the total state administration. For example, the annual budget of the WHD is nearly twice the biennial budget of the entire state administration, not including the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. It should be clear that here is a state agency with a tremendous amount of power in this state due to tremendous financial resources and more than adequate personnel to do a very efficient job building the highways which are so important to the over-all state economy. Since the construction of the Interstate system was begun in July, 1956 more than \$208.7 Million worth of contracts has been awarded. As of 1966 the Wyoming portion of the interstate system consisted of 503 miles with another 120 more miles under contract. When completed, the Interstate in Wyoming will consist of 911.2 miles and will have been constructed at a cost of about one million dollars per mile or \$911.2 million.

²²Wyoming, Biennial Report, Wyoming Highway Department (1965-1966).

Highways Around Cheyenne

The City of Cheyenne, for example, located in Laramie County, will receive a great deal of benefit from the construction of the interstate highways in and around the city. At the present time, the Wyoming Highway department has \$2,317,415.00 of highway construction underway in Laramie County, Wyoming.²³ Such an amount of money will realize all the communities located near the construction a great deal in the way of an economic boost. There are no exact figures available concerning the economic benefits to the city caused by the intersecting of two Interstates (I-80 and I-25) at the west city limits of the city; however the general retail economy of the city seems to show an increase during the peak of the tourist season and the major oil companies seem to be in a great hurry to locate their service stations on all the exits from these Interstates.²⁴

Heavy industry is practically non existent in Cheyenne. A check of the Chamber of Commerce office and the Industrial Development Association of Cheyenne revealed that nearly all

²³Wyoming, WHD Fact Sheet-Laramie County, Wyoming Highway Department (1968)

²⁴Pat Massman, private interview held in office of Cheyenne Industrial Development Association, Cheyenne, Wyoming, June, 1968.

the existing industry in this area relied upon rail transportation and was not really concerned with the highway situation. There is, however, another type of industry in Wyoming which is very dependent upon good highways. Tourism is one of the most important industries in Wyoming and a city as large as Cheyenne is certain to reap some of the benefits from the tourist dollars spent in the state. It would seem correct to say that since the city is dependent upon tourist money for a great deal of seasonal income, good highways are a concern of most of the citizens of the community.

In any event, the situation in the Cheyenne area concerning the highway program is clearly the concern of all levels of the government for various reasons. A highway decision of the type about which we are concerned is clearly the type of stimulus which may result in a response on the part of interested citizens at all levels of the system. A discussion of the actual political controversy seems to be in order now.

CHAPTER III

THE HIGHWAY DECISION

The Background Of The Bypass Debate¹

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the interstate highway system became a reality shortly after World War II. The choice of construction patterns was left entirely in the hands of the states in keeping with our federal system. Two patterns seemed to emerge as the various state highway departments began construction of their interstate systems. Both patterns are visible in the Wyoming-Nebraska area. The Nebraska Highway Department has followed the policy of constructing their portion of the interstate system in one continuous line which began at the eastern state boundary and moved steadily westward. The Wyoming Highway Department has followed the alternate plan of highway construction. The interstate system in Wyoming has been built on the basis of traffic surveys with the new high-speed roads being placed first at the points of heaviest use with less than desirable road conditions. As a result of this pattern for construction, the interstate system in Wyoming

¹Much of the background material for this chapter was obtained from the files of the Wyoming Highway Department Public Information Office, Mr. Keith Rounds, Director, and from the files of the Wyoming Division Office of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, Mr. John M. Demmer, Division Engineer.

appears as a somewhat incomplete line on the official highway maps of the highway department and the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads.

The controversy in question actually began with the construction of a section of divided highway through the eastern section of the capital city of the state, Cheyenne. This section of road, called Nationway, was built with federal funds and was intended to be the first section of Interstate 80 in the Cheyenne area. Nationway was opened to travel in 1956 but never became part of the Interstate system due to some errors in construction. The Wyoming Highway Department had installed some access roads to Nationway that were controlled only by stop signs instead of the required "cloverleaf" arrangement for access and exit. Nationway now serves east Cheyenne as a truck route, but it is important to note that the first section of Interstate 80 was rejected by the Bureau of Public Roads as unsafe and for this reason did not become a part of the high speed road as had been intended by the highway department.

Prior to the rejection of Nationway by the federal office, the highway department had purchased a section of land in east Cheyenne which was to be used as the right-of-way for a new interstate bypass around the city. This

section of land, purchased with federal funds, lay directly in the center of a new housing development which was soon to be under construction. This new subdivision, to be called Sun Valley Addition, was to figure very prominently in the later controversy. The new right-of-way through Sun Valley Addition was destined to be the link between Interstate 80 from the east and Interstate 80 from the west. The land lay idle, however, from the time of purchase in 1957 until the controversy was ended in 1966.

Needless to say, this right-of-way caused a great many problems for the designers and planners of Sun Valley as they labored to lay out the addition and place schools, streets, and the fire station. It seemed that the selection of the location for the highway bypass had been settled as far as the Wyoming Highway Department was concerned. The state agency shelved any more consideration of the bypass location. As was to become clear later, however, this move on their part was a bit premature as the Bureau of Public Roads had not given their approval to this location and the state highway department could proceed no further with this location until such approval was forthcoming. The issue of the bypass location was to be reopened about five years later by a group which in political orientation is quite different from either of the two road building agencies.

Early in 1962, the local chapter of the League of Women Voters began to place a great deal of pressure on the Mayor of Cheyenne, Worth Story. It was the wish of the League that Mr. Story draw up some sort of comprehensive economic plan for the development of the entire Cheyenne area. This demand on the part of the League was probably the result of a sort of economic vacuum created by the departure of the multitude of construction workers after the completion of the installation of the vast Atlas Missile system for the U.S. Air Force at Fransis E. Warren Air Force Base in the city. The construction industry had formed much of the basis of the area economy for several years and their departure had dealt the community quite a severe economic blow.

Mayor Story reacted to the pressure from the League by establishing a joint planning commission composed of the Laramie County Zoning Board and the city planning commission. The group of planners was to be headed by a local businessman, Mr. A. B. Nuss. Mr. Nuss hired a city planning engineer and a professional planning consultant for the task of studying the existing situation and drawing up such a plan as was desired by the Mayor and the League of Women Voters. The planners began the task by studying the existing and future traffic patterns, the total amount and extent of the city facilities, and the land available for use by the community for growth and expansion.

The study became known as the Guide for Growth and was supported by a wide segment of the community leaders. At the end of a one year period, the planners published a master plan for efficient land use and physical development for the entire Cheyenne area. After the public hearings on the plan were held, the plan was revised, published, and sent to all of the state government agencies for their consideration.² One of the more interested state agencies was the Wyoming Highway Department because the plan included a great deal of material concerning the patterned growth of the area of east Cheyenne adjacent to the proposed Interstate 80 bypass. The issue which had been shelved by the highway department was once again taken down for consideration.

The master plan caused a great deal of concern at the new headquarters of the highway department because it left no room in the eastern section of the city for any large highway interchanges. These interchanges were needed if the highway department plan for the routing of the Interstate 80 bypass was to be feasible. If adopted, this master plan, in effect, negated any consideration of the proposed north route for the bypass which would have bisected

² Jerry Marks, Cheyenne, Wyoming, private interview with City of Cheyenne Planning Engineer, June, 1968.

the Sun Valley Addition. In addition to leaving absolutely no room for huge interchanges, the master plan noted the multitude of serious traffic accidents which had occurred in the area of the location of the new bypass and recommended quite adamantly that no more traffic be routed through this area of the city. It should be quite obvious that this master plan for area development did little to provide encouragement to the state highway engineers.

One year later, in 1963, the Wyoming Highway Department, partially because of the Guide for Growth Plan, prepared another cost estimate for an alternate route for the location of the interstate bypass through east Cheyenne. The highway department submitted this new proposal to the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads for consideration after being very careful to include nearly all the recommendations of the Guide for Growth study. There was no doubt that the federal agency had a copy of the master plan and was very anxious to include some portions of the study into the new highway. Included with the new proposal, which became known as the south route, was a request by the highway department for prompt and total endorsement of their

original proposal to locate the Interstate 80 bypass on the north route through Sun Valley Addition.³

The engineers of the local office of the Bureau of Public Roads took the new proposal under consideration and subsequently informed the officials of the highway department that the north route had not been approved by the field office and the state must wait for this approval before proceeding any further in the matter. The federal officials also informed the state officials that their office would choose whichever route seemed to be the more feasible under the circumstances.⁴ This notification of the stand which was to be taken by the Bureau of Public Roads seemed to ignite the issue into a full scale controversy which was eventually to involve nearly all segments of the community.

The Routes Examined

In August of 1964, the Wyoming Highway Department had completed cost studies of both the original proposal and the new alternate proposal. These proposals were submitted

³David L. Toillon, Cheyenne, Wyoming, private interview held at Cheyenne Division Office of the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads. June, 1968.

⁴Ibid.

to the Bureau of Public Roads for final action. The highway department made it quite clear to the federal officials that the state still favored the northern route, a stand no doubt precipitated by the fact that the state held title to the land in question. The federal bureau took both cost estimates and the accompanying engineering studies under advisement knowing full well that the field office would make the final decision concerning the location of the Interstate 80 bypass. The decision would not be an easy one to make as both routes have distinct advantages.

The north route or "a" route was the original plan made by the state highway engineers prior to the Guide for Growth Study⁵. If this plan were selected by the Bureau of Public roads for the location of the new highway, a traveler approaching the city from the east would follow the route of the present U.S. 30 from the Archer Overpass, which crosses the Union Pacific Railroad tracks about six miles east of Cheyenne, into the city. The west-bound traveler would enter Cheyenne in the section of the city which contains many motels, service stations, and restaurants. This plan is obviously intended to benefit those service industries located in east Cheyenne. The first

⁵Wyoming Highway Department, Report on Cheyenne Urban-Laramie County I-80-6 (3) Line A (Cheyenne: WHD, 1963)

interchange would be located at the intersection of Nationway and Pershing Boulevard east of the city on U.S. 30. If the west-bound traveler chose not to leave the highway at this interchange, the next opportunity would be observed at the Central Avenue interchange located south of the city on U.S. 85 & 87. From the first interchange at Pershing and Nationway, the road would bend south through Sun Valley Addition and then turn back to the west immediately behind the Frontier Refining Company. This north route would cross the Union Pacific tracks in two places which didn't seem to make the railroad officials amenable to the idea.

The south route or "b" route was the second plan submitted to the federal engineers for consideration.⁶ This alternate proposal was probably the result of the Guide for Growth Study of 1962, although this fact is difficult to substantiate. It is known, however, that after the publication of the master plan, there was a great deal of personal contact between local officials and the officials of the highway department concerning the best location for the bypass. The section of the master plan which seemed to cause the officials of the Wyoming Highway Department to reconsider the situation was the section that recommended, in very strong language, that the new route should stay south of the

⁶Ibid., Line B.

railroad tracks and avoid crossing them if at all possible. This suggestion was very acceptable to the Union Pacific Railroad officials who did not seem to care where the bypass was located as long as it was not visible from the trains.

To the west-bound traveler on the south route, the first opportunity to exit at Cheyenne would be a proposed interchange at the Archer Overpass about six miles east of the city. The reasoning for the location of an interchange at this somewhat distant point was probably the service it would provide the farmers and ranchers living in this part of the county. In addition to the vast farms and ranches in this area, the U.S. Air Force operates many Minuteman Missile sites in proximity to the highway. In order to service these missiles, the USAF relies on a fleet of huge trucks which require excellent roads.

The second opportunity to exit at Cheyenne would be the interchange proposed at a location about one mile south of the exact intersection of Nationway and Pershing Boulevard. Between these two interchanges, the highway would follow a course roughly parallel to the Union Pacific main line, although the Interstate would stay south and never cross. There was also proposed, an access road which would link the second interchange with east Cheyenne thereby

enabling the traveler to avail himself of all the services provided. The Wyoming Highway Department designed this south route to be shorter than the north route, to stay far south of the railroad tracks, and to eliminate the expense of constructing two railroad overpasses. Obviously, the south route was shorter and cheaper.

From an investigation conducted at both the state highway department and the federal bureau engineering offices, it was learned that highway engineers in general seem to favor two distinct theories concerning the location of highway bypasses on the interstate system.⁷ Some of the designers of the highways favored routing the interstate system as close as possible to a city in order to provide easy access and exit to the city for those who might wish to stop and utilize the services provided. The opposite view is shared by those engineers who desire to route the highways as far away from the city environs as possible. These designers seem to favor the traveler who wishes to arrive at a given destination as fast and as easily as possible. Both the north route and the south route roughly correspond to these two design ideas held by highway engineers.

⁷David L. Toillion, Planning and Programming Engineer, U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, and Donald A. Carlson, Design Engineer, Wyoming Highway Department, Cheyenne, Wyoming, private interviews, June, 1968.

As the controversy grew in intensity, a third route entered the picture. However, to mention this new route at this point would be premature as the proposal was still more than one year away.

The Community Acts and Reacts

The Bureau of Public Roads had made no decision about the location for the Interstate 80 bypass for nearly one year after both proposals were submitted by the highway department. There had been many consultations between state and federal officials during this year, but no decision had been forthcoming from the Federal Building. In September of 1964, some of the local officials began to take an active interest in the impending decision as it appeared to them that the Bureau of Public Roads was stalling. The first group composed of community leaders to take an active role in the issue was the Laramie County Commission.

In a letter to the Wyoming Highway Department, the three elected officials, Doran Lummis, Mark Foster, and Ray Walterschied, outlined the stand to be taken by the rural residents of Laramie County. The three-man commission favored the south route for the following reasons:

- 1) The rural areas east of Cheyenne transport thousands of ton-miles of farm products from that location to the terminal markets of Greeley and Denver, Colorado. The farmers and ranchers would save much in the way of time and money by utilizing the shorter south route with the interchange at Archer Overpass.
- 2) The south route would give better truck access from the Interstate to the county areas which were already zoned for industrial development.
- 3) The south route would facilitate better land use and provide a more realistic basis for long-range planning.
- 4) The Laramie County Zoning Board had previously gone on record as favoring the south route as had a majority of the south Cheyenne merchants.⁸

A rebuttal to this line of argument was not long in coming from another community group who had spoken before. Nearly one week after the commissioners of Laramie County had come out in favor of the south route, a massive letter arrived on the desk of Mr. John Demmer, the chief engineer of the local office of the Bureau of Public Roads. The huge correspondence was written by the Chief Engineer and Superintendent of the Wyoming Highway Department, Mr. J. R. Bromley and his Assistant State Highway Engineer, Mr. W.E. Sutton. From the introductory remarks of the letter, it was quite clear that the two state highway officials

⁸ Letter, Board of Laramie County Commissioners to Wyoming Highway Department, September 2, 1964, WHD, Archives.

were speaking, in effect, for both the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce and the City of Cheyenne Commission. These two powerful local groups had fully endorsed the proposal made by the highway department and in some cases had helped write it. Bromley and Sutton, and therefore the city officials, spoke out in favor of the north route for the location of the Interstate 80 bypass. To substantiate their contention they listed several factors that should be seriously considered by the Bureau of Public Roads before they made the final selection of the route. According to these officials:

- 1) The north route would enable the highway department to utilize the existing right-of-way which had been previously acquired for the bypass.
- 2) The north route had been previously approved by the federal agency and the state highway department. This approval had encouraged a great deal of economic growth and development in the area of east Cheyenne traversed by the north route. A decision to select the south route would have an adverse effect upon the economy of the immediate area.
- 3) The south route would require the construction of an interchange at Archer Overpass near the Union Pacific tracks. It was felt that this interchange would create a congested appearance and a hazardous situation.
- 4) The south route would route additional traffic over the old Riner Viaduct which carries traffic over the Union Pacific Railroad Yards into downtown Cheyenne. The two engineers felt that this old overpass was already operating beyond its practical capacity.

- 5) The connecting road from the south route through Sun Valley Addition would lead traffic into a very congested area which had been the location of several fatal traffic accidents in the past.
- 6) The south route would cause traffic entering Cheyenne from the Archer interchange to travel over nearly six miles of old two-lane highway before reaching the city.
- 7) The north route, on the other hand, would be much more convenient for traffic desiring to enter the city from the east.
- 8) The north route would make the connecting of Interstate 80 and Interstate 25 on the northeast side of Cheyenne easier. This link would make the transporting of the Air Force missiles quite a bit easier.
- 9) The Union Pacific did not desire the highway located closer than 1500 feet south of their tracks in south Cheyenne. The railroad officials considered this land as prime industrial and best served by rail.
- 10) The north route would eliminate the accident-prone Archer Overpass and be much easier to maintain by the highway department road crews.
- 11) The costs to the highway users would be nearly equal for both routes.⁹

This official notification from the local groups was followed very soon by an official reply by the Bureau of Public Roads to this latest request for approval.

⁹Letter, J. R. Bromley to John M. Demmer, September 3, 1964, BPR Files.

In a letter addressed to the Wyoming Highway Department, but clearly directed to all parties concerned, Mr. Demmer officially notified the state and the city that the previous approval of the north route was suspended and that a final choice of a location would be approved after a full study had been given to the engineering data available on the two lines proposed.¹⁰ This letter seemed almost like a rebuke to the state and to the city for meddling in something that was out of their sphere of influence. It seems clear that this letter and the line of reasoning contained therein sparked the issue into a full scale controversy as many community leaders were outraged by the tone of the message. The community seemed to become polarized into two camps each believing that one or the other locations was the best possible solution.

Soon after the letter from Demmer to the highway department, the Wyoming Highway Commission, the policy-making body of the highway department, took a firm stand and unanimously endorsed the north route. This extreme action was taken at the monthly meeting of the state commission in Cheyenne. The action was extreme because the

¹⁰Letter, John M. Demmer to Wyoming Highway Department, September 8, 1964, WHD Archives.

highway commission, which serves on a state-wide basis and is appointed by the governor of the state, does not usually take an official stand on a particular section of highway.¹¹ Perhaps this unusual stand was explained by the presence of a very outspoken and forceful businessman on the highway commission. The representative of the First Judicial District on the highway commission was Mr. Gus Fleischli, the owner and operator of a large truck stop and service center in Cheyenne. Mr. Fleischli, a very colorful and flamboyant person, was a stout advocate of the north route and probably persuaded the commission to back the drive for approval of this route.

Several ad hoc groups appeared in the picture as time passed and no decision came from the sixth floor of the Federal Building. The largest and most vocal of these groups was the organization of nearly all the merchants who had interests in south Cheyenne. This group adopted the very impressive title of The Cheyenne Committee for Better and Safer Highways and composed a letter to the Wyoming Highway Department in which they outlined their stand on the issue. The southside group favored the south route for Interstate 80 and gave the following reasons for this position:

¹¹Wyoming Highway Department, Biennial Report (1964-1966).

- 1) The north route would reduce the use of the Interstate as an important military artery as it would be extremely difficult to expand and widen.
- 2) The Sun Valley Addition is already a heavily populated residential area with serious traffic hazards. The north route would only add to these hazards.
- 3) The construction of the north route would depress values of property in the Sun Valley Addition.
- 4) The construction of the interchange at Pershing and Nationway would favor the north route and create a far greater traffic hazard than the interchange at Archer Overpass.
- 5) The north route would create three costly and hazardous overpasses while the south route would require only one.
- 6) The north route would be more expensive to police and maintain.
- 7) The north route could not be expanded easily into a six-lane highway if future needs warranted such expansion.
- 8) The Bureau of Public Roads had promised that the cheapest route would be selected.
- 9) The south route would bring greater long-term economic benefits to the City of Cheyenne and its environs. This would be the basis for a more orderly growth and development.
- 10) The south route would be less expensive initially because it would be approximately one mile shorter¹² and cost almost two million dollars less to build.

¹²Letter, Cheyenne Committee for Better and Safer Highways to Wyoming Highway Department, September 20, 1964, WHD Archives.

The ad hoc Committee for Better and Safer Highways was to be later opposed by the ad hoc Committee for Organized Growth which supported the third proposal for the location of the Interstate 80 bypass which was soon to appear on the scene.

The controversy seemed to cool for the period from September of 1964 until July of the following year. This cooling off period was probably utilized for the regrouping of forces for the summer offensive against the Bureau of Public Roads. The complexion of the entire controversy seemed to change abruptly as the leadership of the state highway department changed hands.

On July 1, 1965, Mr. J. R. Bromley retired as Chief Engineer and Superintendent of the Wyoming Highway Department. His position was filled by Mr. Ross G. Stapp, a very capable highway engineer who had served with the Wyoming Highway Department for many years.

Soon after assuming control over this section of the state bureaucracy, Stapp announced that in accordance with Section 128 of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1958, public hearings on the proposed locations would be held as soon as possible. Why this had not been suggested sooner is a matter for conjecture because to hold such hearings would be necessary before any decision could be made. Mr. Stapp

also let slip to the press that his department had been working on an alternate proposal to be submitted to the Bureau of Public Roads for their consideration. He billed this third route as a compromise between the north and south routes, but was unable to elaborate on the location as the cost survey had not been completed by his engineers.¹³ The highway department was unsure as to the significant variation, if any, between the new proposal and the two previous routes.

Immediately prior to the public hearings and after his department had thoroughly examined the alternate proposal, Mr. Stapp summoned officials of the Bureau of Public Roads, his own highway department, Laramie County, the City of Cheyenne, and the local newspapers, to an informal meeting in his office at the highway department. The purpose of this informal meeting was to unveil the new proposal for the location of the bypass through east Cheyenne. It was also revealed during this meeting that highway commissioner Gus Fleischli had suggested and helped design this alternate solution to the issue.¹⁴

¹³Kirk Knox, private interview, Wyoming State Tribune, Cheyenne, Wyoming, June, 1968.

¹⁴Cheyenne, Wyoming, interviews with officials of BPR, WHD, City of Cheyenne, and Cheyenne Newspapers, Inc., June, 1968.

The national, state, and local officials listened very carefully as Stapp described the new route for the highway. The middle or "c" route would follow the route of present U.S. 30 east from Archer Overpass to a point of ground east of the city which was of sufficient altitude to provide an excellent panoramic view of Cheyenne. The first interchange would appear just west of this crest at approximately the location of Memorial Gardens Cemetary. This interchange would enable the west-bound traveler to view a scenic panorama of the entire area before reaching the exit ramp. After the interchange, the road would bend toward the south to a point approximately one and one-half miles east of Sun Valley Addition. From this point, line "c" would follow the path of the south route to the next interchange at Central Avenue where Interstate 80 would cross U.S. 85 & 87. This middle route did not call for an interchange at Sun Valley addition as all west-bound traffic would be diverted into Cheyenne via old U.S.30.¹⁵ Because this new route crossed the Union Pacific tracks in only two places, it was hoped that the railroad officials would support this proposal. It was obvious that Stapp and Fleischli were

¹⁵Wyoming Highway Department, Report on Cheyenne Urban-Laramie County I-80-6 (3) Line C (Cheyenne: WHD, 1965).

offering the assembled officials what they hoped would be an acceptable compromise.

Immediately after the informal briefing by Stapp and Fleischli, the three-man Cheyenne City Commission came out unanimously in favor of the middle route. Mayor Bill Nation said that it looked like a very good route; Commissioner Herb Kingham said simply that he liked it; while Commissioner George Dubois said that he felt it was a very good compromise. All was not so agreeable with the other local officials, however. Two of the three Laramie County Commissioners rejected the new route. Doran Lummis and Mark Foster said that the county would support only the south route because of the lower cost of construction, the boost it would give to industrial development in the county, and the fact that the compromise route would be a barrier to any eastern expansion of the community. County Commissioner Ray Walterschied stood alone in support of the middle route.¹⁶

A few days after the new proposal had been announced, another ad hoc group appeared on the scene. This group adopted the title of the Committee for Organized Growth and took a stand in opposition to the other large ad hoc group the Committee for Better and Safer Highways. The Committee

¹⁶Wyoming State Tribune, July 7, 1965.

for Organized Growth was composed of several local business and professional leaders who had interests in the eastern area of the city. This ad hoc group fully endorsed Fleischli and the Wyoming Highway Department in their attempt to persuade the Bureau of Public Roads to end the controversy by giving approval to the middle route.

Mr. William E. Vondy, the owner and operator of one of the largest motels in east Cheyenne, was selected to be the interim president and spokesman for the group. Vondy wasted no time in commending the highway department for its concern for the economy of the community and its realistic compromise to end the entire controversy. During the entire campaign, Vondy repeatedly emphasized that his group represented the financial, restaurant, service station, motel, and retail trade industries of all parts of the community. His list of supposed collaborators was most impressive and no doubt intended to place fear in the hearts of the federal officials. Included as collaborators with his group were the Cheyenne City Commission, the Cheyenne Board of Realtors, the Cheyenne Motel Association, and a group referred to as "a majority of the Chamber of Commerce".¹⁷ This last group mentioned was clearly in bad

¹⁷William Vondy, private interview held at Fleetwood Motel, Cheyenne, Wyoming, June, 1968.

taste as previous to this announcement, Mr. Charles Carey, a very prominent businessman and leader of the local Chamber of Commerce had come out in favor of the south route. His endorsement was seconded by most of the downtown merchants which constitute a clear majority of the membership of the Chamber.¹⁸

Ignoring this flaw in his reasoning, Vondy continued his one-man campaign against approval of the south route. He stressed the psychological deterrent to tourist travel offered by the seven miles of Wyoming prairie which must be crossed before a traveler could reach the community via the south route. Vondy also stressed the fact that the middle route would offer plenty of room for industrial expansion in addition to providing a realistic solution to the plight of those who had already invested millions of dollars in Cheyenne's present industry. The Committee for Organized Growth felt the future industrial expansion of the area should not be the only criterion to be used in determining a highway location. The committee members felt that existing industries and businesses deserved some consideration as well. Vondy was very lavish with his praise

¹⁸Pat Massman, Cheyenne, Wyoming, private interview held at the offices of the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, June 1968.

of the local office of the Bureau of Public Roads as he cited their past cooperation with his ad hoc group which had enabled them to take a more informed stand on the issues.¹⁹

The Wyoming Highway Department followed the arguments of Vondy's committee with an official endorsement of either the north route or the middle route. Ross Stapp said that the south route was now unacceptable to his department and the state highway commission. There was still no word from the federal building.

On a clear and warm evening in August, 1965, Ross Stapp stepped up before a capacity crowd in the new auditorium of the highway department and opened the public hearing on the bypass issue. During the evening, Stapp was to be the chairman of a meeting during which two types of arguments were to be presented. One argument concerned the possible loss of business on the part of some members of the community should one or the other of the routes be adopted. The other line of reasoning used during the arguments feared the period of rapid and unorganized residential and industrial growth which would follow the adoption of one or the other of the routes.

¹⁹Vondy, op. cit.

The compromise or "c" route was opposed by those people from the eastern portion of the community who feared a loss of business because tourists would be unable to see the city until they had passed by the area containing the business interests owned and operated by the opponents of this plan. In nearly equal numbers at the meeting were those residents of the community who felt that the middle route would prevent the community from growing toward the east in any sort of organized manner.

First to speak in favor of the compromise route was the new Mayor of Cheyenne, Herb Kingham. Mr. Kingham told those in attendance that he spoke for the City Commission when he gave his endorsement to the "c" route. The line of reasoning used by the new Mayor indicated to those in attendance at the meeting that the local businessman had done considerable research in the matter. Mr. Kingham used the following facts to support his contention that the middle route would be in the best interests of the city. According to Kingham the middle route:

- 1) offered a good compromise solution to the problem.
- 2) gave tourists a good view of the community while they approached it from the east.
- 3) offered these travelers easy access to the city should they wish to stop.

- 4) would help to alleviate the serious overburden of traffic on the old Riner Viaduct.
- 5) would not hamper the growth of the community.
- 6) would cause the tourist trade on the east side of the city to flourish.²⁰

Next to speak were the Laramie County Commissioners who came out in favor of the south route. Once again, however, Ray Walterschied dissented and favored the stand taken by the Mayor. Doran Lummis, the chairman of the group, spoke for himself and Mark Foster and gave the following reasons for their stand favoring line "b". Lummis stated that line "b":

- 1) provided for four interchanges near the community.
- 2) was the shortest and therefore the least expensive.
- 3) would eliminate any barriers to eastern urbanization.
- 4) would be conducive to long-range planning.²¹

Ray Walterschied told the assembly that he favored the middle route because "it was right", which was a strictly emotional appeal. Mr. Walterschied received only a token applause at the completion of his talk.

The argument presented by Mayor Kingham was seconded by Gus Fleischli, the originator of the middle route. Mr.

²⁰Hearings before the Wyoming Highway Department, Cheyenne Marginal I-80-6 (3), August, 1965, WHD Archives.

²¹Ibid.

Fleischli, always an active campaigner, had little to add to what the Mayor had presented, but this was added with a great deal of gusto and political maneuvering.

The Committee for Organized Growth had hired the services of a professional public relations firm to represent the group at the hearing. Mr. William K. Anderson, a public relations consultant, presented the case of William Vondy's ad hoc group. During his initial remarks, Mr. Anderson simply reiterated the psychological factors of the tourist trade which had been so much a part of the argument used by Vondy during his one-man show. After very nearly causing the audience to fall asleep, Anderson opened the eyes of most of those assembled by stating that the three-man Congressional delegation from Wyoming had individually backed serious consideration of the middle route.²² This was the first instance of the state's two Senators and lone Representative participating in the controversy. To many of those at the hearing, to bring the Congressional delegation into the fray would be to alter the complexion of the controversy and make the bypass issue of national concern. Such an idea was not unanimous, however, as many saw the men in Washington as local officials who were interested in the events in their home communities.

²²Ibid.

After some investigation, however, it was learned that Senators Milward Simpson and Gale McGee had merely recommended that every consideration be given the new route by the Bureau of Public Roads. Teno Ronacchio, the only Congressman from the Equality State, also recommended consideration for Cheyenne from the federal officials.

After Mr. Anderson had presented the case for the ad hoc Committee for Organized Growth, a new ad hoc group was to be heard. The Citizens Industrial Council, headed by Mr. Joe Simpson, a local property owner, said that the group would support the route that provided for an interchange at the south edge of Sun Valley Addition. Mr. Simpson and his group wanted the Interstate to provide access to the Wyoming Hereford Ranch Road in southeast Cheyenne.²³ It seemed obvious that this group wanted consideration to be given to the impending location of a new refinery which was to be built by the Frontier Refining Company. In the past, some of the oil company officials had expressed a wish to locate the new refinery in close proximity to the existing plant which is located on the Hereford Ranch Road.

Attorney Walter Urbigkit and Realtor Jerry Rosenblum were the next delegates to speak. In stark contrast to

²³Ibid.

the heated discussion which had been taking place between advocates of the two proposals, Urbigkit and Rosenblum questioned the feasibility of all three routes as none of the proposals would provide access to the interstate for those residents of the community living in the eastern section.²⁴ Their argument appeared valid since the residents of Sun Valley Addition in particular would have a terrible problem should they wish to travel east on the Interstate.

Ross Stapp told the audience that the problem with which his department was faced was to adopt the location for the highway which would satisfy the requirements of interstate system as well as the wishes of the local community at a reasonable cost to the taxpayers. The facility, when completed, should suffice for the current needs of the community as well as remaining equally serviceable for many years in the future. Mr. Stapp closed the hearing with the statement that it would be necessary for his highway department to make a thorough study of the transcript of the hearing before any decision could be made. The Bureau of Public Roads would have the final word in the matter be-

²⁴Ibid.

cause of the large amount of money appropriated for the project.²⁵

Apparently the Wyoming Highway Department did give careful consideration to the transcript of the hearing since no word regarding the decision came forth from the headquarters until November. On the first day of November, a letter was delivered to Mr. John Demmer at the local office of the Bureau of Public Roads. The letter was written by Ross Stapp and concerned the selection of the middle route for the final location of the bypass for Interstate 80.²⁶ In addition to a recommendation for the selection of line "c", Stapp also proposed the construction of a second interchange adjacent to Sun Valley Addition to provide a more full integration of urban and interstate traffic patterns. The state highway official called the compromise route the most feasible route studied for all the various segments of the community who had presented their views during the hearing. The highway department included six points upon which this recommendation was based. The middle line was thought to be in the best interests of the community because it would:

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Letter, Ross G. Stapp to John M. Demmer, November 1, 1965, BPR Files.

- 1) protect the existing tax structure.
- 2) ensure the future industrial development of the area.
- 3) ensure other types of development for the area.
- 4) better integrate local and Interstate traffic patterns.
- 5) better locate the important interchanges.
- 6) satisfy esthetic considerations.²⁷

After presenting his department's case, Mr. Stapp briefed the federal official about the findings his engineers had uncovered from their perusal of the transcript from the hearing. The highway department called attention to the concern for the protection of the existing business establishments that comprise the basis of the existing tax structure. It was contended that line "c" would better protect the estimated six million dollars worth of tourist facilities located in east Cheyenne. The state highway official felt that, contrary to the view of Doran Lummis and others, the Interstate if located on line "c" would not become a barrier to future industrial growth. To support this contention, Mr. Stapp and his engineers said that any future industrial development would more or less follow the Union Pacific tracks into the community. If

²⁷Ibid.

the interstate were located on the compromise route with good utilization of the interchanges and a sufficient number of separation structures at the interstate and the key arterial streets of the city, this route could actually aid industrial development. The state highway engineer also called attention to the need to diversify traffic patterns in Cheyenne in order to provide an equal opportunity to all businessmen engaged in rendering service to traffic. Also of prime concern was the need to diversify traffic to avoid concentrating traffic on a street system that is rapidly approaching its practical capacity. The proponents of line "c" also stressed the importance of relieving pressure of the old Riner Viaduct which had served the community well for many years. The Wyoming Highway Department concluded with an appeal for prompt concurrence on their request for approval of line "c" for the best interests of the local community and the highway user.²⁸

The appeal for prompt concurrence seemed to go unheard as the Bureau of Public Roads office in Cheyenne saw fit to withhold approval on any of the proposals presented. The federal engineers had obtained unlisted telephone numbers and refused to comment on the decision when found at their offices.

²⁸Ibid.

Washington Intervenes

Salvation was soon to come, however, as it was announced that the Federal Highway Administrator in Washington would fly to Cheyenne in order to personally inspect all three routes. This announcement, in effect, saved the local office of his bureau from a very awkward situation in which they would have to make a decision that was sure to offend some members of the community. It must be remembered that these federal officials were also members of the community and some of them had lived in Cheyenne for many years.

The federal administrator who was to make the final decision was a highway engineer of some renown who had headed the Bureau of Public Roads for some time. Mr. Rex Whitten had begun his career as a highway engineer with the Missouri Highway Department many years previously. It is interesting to note that Mr. Whitten was a close friend of another highway engineer who had served with him in Missouri. This engineer who had also begun with the Missouri Highway Department was Ross Stapp.²⁹ It could be supposed on the basis of this long friendship, that Whitten

²⁹John Demmer, private interview held at Cheyenne Division Office, BPR, Cheyenne, Wyoming, June, 1968.

was coming to Wyoming in answer to a request by an old friend, although his subsequent decision was certainly not indicative of any friendship.

Mr. Whitten arrived in Cheyenne and met with the Wyoming Highway Commission at breakfast. He told the state highway officials that he felt it was good policy for the administrators, like himself, to leave Washington on occasion and get out in the field in order to see how things were going in the field offices. This particular trip was intended to obtain a better understanding of the factors involved in this particular decision and to see for himself why it had been such a difficult situation.³⁰

After the meeting, the highway officials conducted Mr. Whitten on an inspection of all three of the proposed routes in order that he might personally view the situation first hand. The federal administrator gave no sign of approval or disapproval at the sight of line "b" or line "c". He did, however, reject line "a" the north route immediately which came as no great surprise to the highway commission.³¹

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

Prior to boarding the airplane for the return trip to Washington, Mr. Whitten told the highway officials of Wyoming that he expected a decision on the selection for the location of Interstate 80 through east Cheyenne to be made in a few weeks. According to the national official, the Bureau of Public Roads still favored the south route, but he told the state officials that all consideration would be given to the alternate proposal. He reiterated that the final decision would be made on the basis of financial considerations, considerations of local service, and the local economy.³² With this departing word, he boarded the airplane for the nation's capital never to be seen in Wyoming again.

The major disagreement between the Wyoming Highway Department and the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, at this point in the controversy, centered on two important points. The middle route proposed by the highway department was about .7 of a mile longer than the south route. Due to this additional length, the cost of construction would be about one million dollars more. The Bureau of Public Roads had to answer the question of whether line "c" was worth

³²Ibid.

the extra one million dollars to the trans-continental traveler as well as to the local residents. The answer to this question was soon forthcoming.

Mr. Whitten's Decision

Early in April of 1966, Mr. Whitten sent letters to Senator Milward Simpson, Senator Gale McGee and Representative Teno Roncalio in Washington informing the delegation that the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads was unable to concur with the recommendation made by Ross Stapp and the state highway department for the selection of line "c". He told the lawmakers that the major differences between the two routes were the estimated costs of construction and certain aesthetic considerations. The federal official felt that, while the view of the community offered the traveler by the alternate route was a distinct advantage to the business establishments in east Cheyenne, this favorable factor could not justify the much higher cost of construction. Therefore, his agency had directed the local office to approve the south route as the location for the Interstate 80 bypass.³³ When the Congressional delegation from

³³Letters, Rex M. Whitten to Milward Simpson, Gale McGee, and Teno Roncalio, April 4, 1966, BPR Files.

Wyoming informed the state and community leaders about the decision, a reaction was not long in coming.

Aftermath of the Decision: Community Reaction

Gus Fleischli, the originator of the alternate proposal, was the first to assail the decision. Mr. Fleischli, not noted for his love of government decision-makers at any level, called the Bureau of Public Roads "all powerful" and praised the Wyoming Highway Department for basing their argument on cold engineering facts as the federal engineers had not. Mr. Fleischli also rebuked the federal agency for ignoring the desires and interests of the community which had been brought to light during the public hearings. The local office of the bureau was not to escape the wrath of the state highway commissioner as he criticized them for overlooking the tremendous investment made by the business community in east Cheyenne and the effect the decision would have upon the State of Wyoming.³⁴

Mayor Herb Kingham reacted to the decision by requesting that Ross Stapp and his engineers withhold any further action to seek a southeast extension of Interstate 80 until

³⁴Gus Fleischli, private interview held at Husky Oil Company Terminal, Cheyenne, Wyoming, June, 1968.

the city could pursue additional courses of action. The Mayor called the decision from Washington "most displeasing" as this route would not provide easy access to the city.³⁵

The additional courses of action by the city must have included putting a bit of pressure on the lawmakers in Washington since the next person to enter the already crowded picture was Wyoming's Republican Senator Milward Simpson. In the nation's capital, the Senator contacted Rex Whitten and requested a more detailed explanation of the reasons for the refusal of the Bureau of Public Roads to approve the recommendation of the state highway department for the middle route. Senator Simpson felt that some consideration should have been given to the potential economic impact upon the area through which the highway would pass as well as to the immediate cost factors. The veteran lawmaker concluded his request for a detailed explanation with a wish to know if the decision by Whitten was irrevocable.³⁶

³⁵Letter, Herb Kingham to Ross G. Stapp, April 6, 1966, WHD Archives.

³⁶Letter, Milward L. Simpson to Rex M. Whitten, April 6, 1966, BPR Files.

While the action was beginning to increase in Washington, the action within the community seemed to lessen. It seemed almost as if the groups of the community felt adequate only to deal with the local office of the Bureau of Public Roads. Perhaps these local people and their groups, both permanent and ad hoc, became convinced that the matter had been decided from Washington so the only hope of relief would come from their elected representatives in the nation's capital. For all intents and purposes, the community was stilled and eagerly awaiting the results of Senator Simpson's investigation.

The action by the Republican lawmaker brought almost immediate fruit in Washington as Rex Whitten replied to Senator Simpson with a compromise solution to the long standing controversy. The plan proposed to Simpson by Whitten offered prompt Federal approval of line "c" for the location of Interstate 80 bypass if the Wyoming Highway Department would pay the difference of \$1,046,000 between the cost of construction of line "b" and line "c". Whitten closed his reply to the Wyoming Senator by informing him that unless the state highway department could offer some rather convincing new material which would significantly alter the merits of their case, there would

be no basis for reconsideration.³⁷ Mr. Whitten seemed to be informing the senator that unless something totally unforeseen should occur, his decision was irrevocable.

This compromise solution was not exactly the answer that the highway department had in mind to be sure, but the state agency hoped that the lone representative from Wyoming might have more luck in securing a reconsideration from Mr. Whitten. This hope was shattered when Mr. Roncalio opened a letter from Mr. Whitten.

In the letter replying to Mr. Roncalio's request for reconsideration, the Bureau of Public Roads simply reiterated their previous stand on the issue. The federal agency listed four reasons to justify their refusal to reconsider the case. According to the highway bureau:

- 1) The view factor was the same in both cases.
- 2) The south route provided opportunity for industrial expansion.
- 3) There was little evidence to support the contention of state engineers that Riner Viaduct would be overloaded.
- 4) Any loss of business in east Cheyenne would be offset by an increase in the total business of the community.³⁸

³⁷Letter, Rex M. Whitten to Milward Simpson, April 12, 1966, BPR Files.

³⁸Letter, Rex M. Whitten to Teno Roncalio, April 12, 1966, BPR Files.

The Final Drive

It was obvious to both Senator Simpson and Representative Roncalio that correspondence was not the answer. Both Wyoming lawmakers combined their strength and arranged a meeting with Mr. Whitten in Washington. It was hoped that such a meeting might be the catalyst that would cause him to change his mind and reconsider the matter.

Prior to this meeting, the lawmakers returned to Cheyenne and conferred with state and local officials. A meeting attended by Senator Simpson, Representative Roncalio, Governor Cliff Hansen, Ross Stapp and William Sutton of the highway department, Mayor Kingham, Gus Fleischli of the highway commission, and some representatives from the now reactivated Committee for Organized Growth, was held in order that the two Wyoming lawmakers would be able to concentrate on some sort of strategy while talking to Rex Whitten. The group chose to emphasize the argument that the south route would be very dangerous to the economic future of the community. At this point, the other Wyoming Senator, Democrat Gale McGee, threw his support behind Senator Simpson and Representative Roncalio. Senator McGee also agreed to meet with Mr. Whitten along with them and even offered the use of his office for the confrontation. To be invited to the meet-

ing were the three-man Congressional delegation, Governor Hansen, Ross Stapp, and Rex Whitten. As the time for the meeting arrived, the Governor was unable to attend and his place on the committee was taken by Mayor Kingham.³⁹

The meeting was termed a success by the proponents of the compromise route since Rex Witten promised that his department would accept and study very carefully any new proposals for comparison of the south route and the middle route. However, the national official would give no indication as to a time when his agency would have completed such a re-evaluation of the situation.⁴⁰

The re-evaluation was completed a few months later and the Bureau of Public Roads once again rejected the middle route as unacceptable. In a reply to all parties concerned, the federal office of the U.S. Department of Commerce simply reiterated their previous stand that:

- 1) Sufficient reasons to change this viewpoint had not been presented.
- 2) Line "b" was still the shorter and cheaper of the two.

³⁹Wyoming State Tribune, April 25, 1966, p. 1.

⁴⁰Ross G. Stapp, Cheyenne, Wyoming, private interview held at Cheyenne Headquarters of the Wyoming Highway Department, June, 1968.

- 3) Line "b" was in the best interests of the public of Wyoming as well as the travelers of other states.⁴¹

Governor Hansen bitterly assailed the decision by describing the action of the Bureau of Public Roads as a perfect example of federal control and of a federal agency acting against the best interests of Wyoming. This blast by the Governor was the last bit of anger and disappointment heard from the community. The ad hoc groups disbanded as some had been defeated and others had been victorious. The community was no longer polarized into hostile camps and the highway department had turned its resources to the solution of other controversies concerning highway location such as the routing of a new two-lane highway through or around Star Valley in western Wyoming. Ross Stapp was probably heard muttering the following phrase throughout the corridors of the vast highway department complex: "Here we go again".

Here The Case Stands

Early in 1967, Rex Whitten retired as Federal Highway Administrator and was replaced by another long-time

⁴¹Letter, Rex M. Whitten to Ross G. Stapp, September 29, 1966, WHD Archives.

highway engineer, Mr. F. C. Turner. In the meantime, Governor Hansen had become a Republican Senator from Wyoming and it was obvious that he had not forgotten the highway controversy in Cheyenne.

One of the first official acts of the new Senator was to contact the new head of the Bureau of Public Roads about the possibility of reopening negotiations on the compromise route. Perhaps, because Hansen's election promised a ray of hope, the Wyoming Highway Department had not begun construction of the bypass for Interstate 80 in east Cheyenne. Mr. Turner was quick to reply to the junior Senator from Wyoming and he indicated that his bureau might be favorable to a new hearing on the bypass location if the state could produce new evidence to support their contention that line "c" would serve the community interest best as well as the interests of those who would travel through the state on Interstate 80.⁴²

Mayor Kingham agreed to meet later with Ross Stapp and the highway department, who were probably getting provoked about the entire situation as they had been in the middle of the controversy for nearly ten years, to investigate

⁴²Letter, Clifford Hansen to Frank C. Turner, February 1, 1967, BPR Files.

the possibility of presenting new evidence to the Bureau of Public Roads. Before this new evidence could be presented, Mr. Turner made a non-publicized visit to the community in order to inspect the routes for himself. After his return to the nation's capital, Mr. Turner made his decision.

Because the community and state did not present any new evidence to support their contention that line "c" is in the best interest of the motoring public and as a result of his personal inspection, Mr. Turner supported the decision of his predecessor Rex Whitten and selected the south route.⁴³

The Wyoming Highway Department has begun the preliminary work of building the bypass over the south route. At least as far as this agency is concerned the matter is settled.

⁴³Letter, Frank C. Turner to Clifford Hansen, March 25, 1967, BPR Files.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

For all practical purposes, the controversy ended in March of 1967 with the refusal of the Bureau of Public Roads to reconsider their verdict on the location of the I-80 bypass around Cheyenne. The issue seems to have been forgotten by most of the residents of the community who see no further value in renewing the controversy. It would appear that the highway will follow the south route around the city and nothing short of divine intervention is likely to change the situation.

The majority of the citizens of the community apparently are content to accept the decision from Washington, but there still exists a very vocal minority which is not content to let the issue die a natural death. This group, led by Mr. Vondy and Mr. Fleischli, has been quietly contacting various individuals and groups in the community with the avowed hope of enlisting support for another campaign to re-open the issue and perhaps change the outcome. It would appear that this disgruntled group has not much hope for success in their venture since the entire formal political character of the community leadership has changed.

Of the three county commissioners who were involved in the issue, only Doran Lummis remains a member of this county policy-making group. Mayor Herb Kingham has retired from public life and his successor, George Cox, is much more concerned with the construction of the new Community College which was approved by the voters at the time of his election.

Mr. Roncalio, who was the lone U.S. Representative from Wyoming during the controversy, was defeated in his bid for the seat of Senator Simpson who had chosen to retire in 1966. Mr. Roncalio was defeated by Governor Hansen while a member of the opposing political party was winning his former seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. It seems interesting to note that all three men, Senator Simpson, Mr. Roncalio, and Governor Hansen were very active during what was probably the most bitter period of the controversy.

Intergovernmental relations are a very important aspect of our political system and any situation which adversely affects them is serious indeed. One cannot help but feel that intergovernmental relations must have suffered during this period particularly those important relations between the two agencies concerned with the interstate highway system. It seems certain that any reduction of cooperation in road building responsibilities will be a serious problem in a state like Wyoming.

The business community of Cheyenne was disrupted also by the controversy which divided the local commercial interests strictly on a geographical basis according to the location of their various interests in relation to the location of one of the two routes of the bypass. The merchants who operate businesses on the south side of the city seem to be a bit alienated from those of their fellows who conduct their enterprises on the east side of the city. The majority of the members of the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce are the downtown merchants who operate their businesses in the central business district. Members of this group had favored the stand taken by the south side group which alienated them from the east side merchants.

The two Boards of Commissioners which were involved in the controversy have not enjoyed a history of friendly relations as they have struggled to govern the City of Cheyenne and Laramie County. It would appear that an obvious result of this controversy was not the improvement of relations between the two governing bodies. In fact it could be safely stated that intergovernmental cooperation between the two units of local government, county and city, suffered a severe setback as a result of this controversy.

While the controversy was a serious situation for the community, it really had no nationwide significance nor

did the issue cause any significant alteration in the state political system. This particular political struggle does, however, serve as a good illustration of the possible consequences of a serious local problem which affects the stability of the local political system. To merely state that such a situation did exist in Cheyenne is not sufficient in itself as there must be some sort of criteria to illuminate the extent of the reaction and the seriousness of the controversy. In order to adequately illuminate the seriousness of the situation the entire problem must be investigated in the light of the various criteria introduced throughout the thesis.

The fact that men live in communities and are profoundly influenced by the environment seems to be adequately substantiated by this particular case study. With the exception of the national officials from Washington who entered the fray in the latter stages, all of the participants in the controversy were residents of the Cheyenne area. The environment of the community which is one of great economic dependence upon highways was clearly of great influence upon the actions of these residents who sought to improve their economic situation which depended to such a great extent upon the location of the highway.

To state that the community known as Cheyenne, Wyoming, is a geographical area would not be a serious misconception as it is a legally incorporated entity part of which is contained within certain official boundaries. The area of the community which is not contained within the legal boundaries of the City of Cheyenne is contained in another legally constituted area which is known as Laramie County, Wyoming.

Within this community there exists some sort of social life based upon common values or interests. The social life of this community was characterized by a great deal of interaction between the members of the community who shared a common interest about the location of the highway.

Within a community there exist certain significant groups which are formed by the tendency of community members to search out and identify with persons who have similar values. During the course of this particular controversy some of the significant groups of the community were very active. These groups were of a permanent or an ad hoc nature, but almost without exception were composed of community members who shared similar feelings. Some examples of the permanent significant groups which were active in the controversy were the Chamber of Commerce, which is composed of businessmen, the Wyoming Highway Depart-

ment, which is composed primarily of engineers, and the City Commissioners, which is composed of some of the local political leaders. The tendency of community members to seek out and identify with similar others is probably most apparent in the case of the ad hoc groups. Without exception, the Cheyenne Committee for Better and Safer Highways was composed of the business interests from one section of the city while the Committee for Organized Growth was composed of businessmen from another part of the community. Group identification tends to be somewhat stronger temporarily in these ad hoc groups than in the permanent groups because of close similarity of interests on this particular issue which is the basis for the formation of the group.

In our system of government it would appear that a community is endowed with limited political autonomy. Both the city and county units of government which govern the community are creatures of the state and are limited by statute and charter in the exercise of their official functions. In addition to a state government placing limits upon their operation, the governments of the community were forced to submit to pressure and an eventual decision from a national level of government. Thus, the local community was limited in its political autonomy by at least two higher levels of government.

The sense of community found in a community results from the collective sentiments of the people. In the case of the Cheyenne community, it would appear that the collective sentiments of the people had resulted in a sense of a community in which good highways were important. The collective sentiments of the people did not unanimously endorse any of the proposed routes, but the sense of community which seems to be most obvious to the observer is one of pride in being a member of a community which lies astride two Interstate highways.

A community linked to other communities forms the basis for the entire social system. This would appear to be an obvious fact if one considers the community as the basic unit of construction upon which the entire social system is built. Cheyenne is linked with other communities to form the social system. It would appear to be correct to assume that if the communities were not linked the social system would collapse. Therefore, the location of highways is important to the survival of the social system as they are a very important link between communities which may be geographically distant.

One aspect of a community situation which seems to generate more than the normal amount of response from the members is a community issue. This particular issue in

Cheyenne did generate a great deal of response from residents of the area. This great response was probably typified best by the amount of interest shown during the public hearing in August of 1965. Many issues arise in a community during the course of time. Regardless of the seriousness of the issue the response from the community is likely to be immediate and concrete.

The response from the community depends to a great extent upon the type of issue. Community response to issues is likely to be a group response rather than an individual effort by a member of the community. Community issues may involve more than one group and may perhaps involve the entire community. In this case it would seem unfair to say that the entire community was involved. However, if the public hearing was a good indication of the amount of community response, then it would seem correct to say that this particular issue caused a response on the part of a significant number of the important community groups.

The content of community issues may involve economic considerations, political authority, relationships, or conflicting philosophies. The highway location dispute seemed to involve both economic considerations and problems of political authority. Of prime importance were the economic

considerations because of the importance of the highway location to those whose economic livelihood depended upon tourist dollars. However, one cannot ignore the political implications of the controversy. There seemed to be a fundamental issue at stake during the course of the dispute. Which level of government is dominant in the area of highway construction? If this important aspect of governmental performance is characterized by a cooperative effort it certainly was not apparent in this case. The decision seemed arbitrary, but necessarily so. It would appear from this case that the political role of a state highway department is advisory in nature until the actual construction begins. Therefore, it could be argued that this particular issue contained economic considerations as well as a question of ultimate political authority.

Community issues if left unresolved may split an otherwise cohesive community. To say that this issue split the community would appear to overstate the situation. This issue did not result in irreparable damage to the community structure. However, a type of community split did develop as the elements of the community which became involved in the controversy seemed to polarize into two groups which favored one of the other of the two locations. It would appear that if the point were debated long enough, a case could be made that this issue did split a cohesive community.

If unresolved issues are allowed to fester, the result may be the development of a very serious controversy within a community. There can be no doubt that this particular issue was allowed to develop into a serious controversy because an immediate decision which could have resolved the entire matter was not forthcoming from the government. The primary stimulus for the transition from issue to controversy was probably the study which was initiated by the League of Women Voters. In any event, this matter in Cheyenne clearly began as a relatively small community issue, but was allowed to develop into a controversy.

The development of a controversy from an issue is not a simple matter. However, if the issue meets certain criteria, the development is facilitated. The issue must be of great importance to the community, it must affect the community members in different ways, and it must appear soluble. The issue in Cheyenne was important to the community because of the importance of highways to the general economy to the area. The location of the highway bypass affected the community in different ways which ranged from abject indifference to complete involvement in the controversy. Obviously the issue was solveable because of the priority nature of the subject. The completion of the Interstate Highway System is a matter of

national concern and is not likely to be delayed by a local controversy for any length of time. In other words, this dispute would be solved one way or another.

It would appear that an issue might develop into a controversy if a "grass-roots society" is subjected to the impact of modern technology. Cheyenne could be considered a grass-roots society as opposed to a more cosmopolitan society. Modern technology has, in part, been responsible for the creation of a modern highway system. Therefore, this issue concerned the dictates of modern technology and its impact on a community which is probably typical of grass-roots American.

Participation on the part of community members is not likely to be forthcoming if such participation is not viewed as meaningful. It would appear then, that unless participation is meaningful, it will not be attempted. If participation is not attempted or permitted, then the development of a controversy from an issue is likely to be impeded. The highway controversy in Cheyenne developed partly because of the very meaningful nature of the problem. A location of an interstate highway is an important matter to many citizens of this community. To say that this issue developed into a controversy because of meaningful participation seems to be correct.

In addition to being meaningful, community participation, once having reached the stage of total involvement, will probably inflame issues. Such close and total involvement in the issue may result in the intensification of the issue and its development into a controversy. Probably the major cause of such total involvement in the issue on the part of some of the members of the community is the fairly homogeneous population found in small communities. Cheyenne appears to be a very homogeneous community which has not been subjected to a great influx of outsiders for a period of time. If close and total involvement in the issue on the part of some members of the community aids in the transformation from issue to controversy, then a homogeneous community such as Cheyenne would be susceptible to controversy development.

An organized communications network within a community is essential to an awareness of issues. The close proximity of the people of a community to these channels of communication could cause issues to become controversies because of a total awareness of both the issue itself and the possible consequences. In this particular controversy, there seemed to be a widespread awareness of the issue. While it would be incorrect to say that there was total involvement in the controversy, there was awareness. This

fact would seem to indicate a very close proximity of the people of the community to the channels of communications.

An awareness of issues could also result in overparticipation in the controversy by some members of the community. Without a doubt, some members of this community overparticipated in the controversy. In particular, the two leaders of the proponents of the compromise route, Bill Vondy and Gus Fleischli, seemed to participate in the controversy to a degree not characteristic of any of the other participants.

Overparticipation in a controversy can be a dangerous thing. Should the solution to the controversy benefit one's opponent, feelings of apathy or alienation toward the entire community could result. In the instance of the highway controversy, the final outcome did benefit one group at the expense of another. While difficult to prove, it would appear that those who favored the alternate route for the highway have become a bit alienated from the mainstream of community life. In particular, the eastside merchants have very little formal contact with the rest of the business community.

The transition of an issue to a controversy, should all the necessary criteria be present, follows a very neat pattern. It would be incorrect to say that one particular

pattern of development would apply in all cases. However, in the case of the highway matter in Cheyenne, a very definite pattern of development could be observed. The pattern began with the single issue of the location for a highway bypass. The single issue was followed by a period of growth and development in which the situation changed from a mere single issue to a situation which disrupted the stability of the community. As the community disruption spread, more and more groups entered the disagreement. At the time that all the participants had become involved, they seemed to be evenly divided. There were two major points of view held by the participants. Each group appeared evil to the other and there was little chance for compromise. The dispute over the single question of where to locate the highway had become independent of the initial disagreement and had developed into a very serious situation which was characterized by charges and counter-charges being hurled by the participants.

Once an issue has reached a certain stage of development it may become a stimulus which initiates a response from the community. The typical response of a community to a stimulus of this sort is a reaction by the social structure. Such a reaction is characterized by a separation of community groups into two clusters and the formation of ad hoc groups with new leaders within each cluster.

The drawing into the controversy of the formal community organizations is another characteristic. The highway controversy in Cheyenne clearly stimulated the community and caused a response of this sort. The two clusters of groups represented those who favored the south and those who favored the alternate route. The Cheyenne Committee for Better and Safer Highways and the Committee for Organized Growth were good examples of the type of ad hoc groups with new leaders which are found within the two clusters. Some of the formal organizations of the community, which were to be found in one of the two clusters, were the Cheyenne City Commission, the Laramie County Board of Commissioners and the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce.

Should the controversy reach such proportions, the result could possibly be the polarization of a large segment of the community followed by a disruption of the community stability. Such a polarization had taken place in Cheyenne and had resulted in a substantial disruption of the stability of the community. When a community undergoes a polarization of some of the more significant groups the likely result is injurious to the overall solidarity of the area.

Solution to such a problem in a democratic system is not an easy matter. In a political system of quite a

different nature solution might easily result in the elimination of one of the two groups. However, elimination of a group is a bit strong for a democracy which necessarily relies upon more legitimate solutions. It seems obvious that the activity of Mr. Vondy's group after the decision had been finalized indicates that this faction is still very much alive. Elimination of the opposition clearly did not take place in Cheyenne. A possible solution to group elimination as a solution is group assimilation. However, in a situation in which there were two clear-cut points of view, and in which there was no possibility for compromise assimilation of one group by another, this was not an acceptable solution.

A democratic system must necessarily rely upon decision-makers to solve complex problems. The decisions of these elites require voluntary adherence. The decision-makers also have the power to legitimize their decisions after they have been made. The highway controversy could clearly be solved only by a legitimate decision as it was a very complex problem. In reality, it was solved by a decision made by an elite group, but was in keeping with our democratic traditions.

Ideally, community decisions should be made by those who will be most affected by them. These decisions should

be closely intermeshed with the welfare of the community. However, the emphasis in our modern technological society seems to be placed on efficiency and practicality in decision-making and not so much on democratic necessities. As it came to pass, the decision which solved the Cheyenne controversy was far from ideal. It was made in Washington, D. C., by an elite which was not economically, politically, or socially affected by the decision and in no way intermeshed with the welfare of the community. It would appear obvious that this decision, while necessarily the best method of alleviating the problem, was made primarily on the basis of efficiency and practicality in government.

It should not be inferred, however, that the activities of local decision-makers are unimportant. Community decision-makers owe their special status, in large part, to their membership in the significant groups of the community. Group activity, by maximizing the contributions of each of the individual members, can endow each decision-maker with a certain amount of competence which is needed to make an effective decision. Local conflict resolution through local decision-making will probably continue to be an important aspect of our political system so long as no single leadership elite achieves complete domination. It would be

totally inaccurate to state categorically that, because the local decision-makers in Cheyenne were unable to solve their particular problem, this will result in a movement of authority to Washington.

There exists the distinct possibility that a situation could arise in a community in which a single issue had developed into a serious controversy. The controversy was serious enough to cause some of the significant groups of the community to polarize. A solution to the controversy and a reunification of the community was essential and could only be accomplished through a legitimate, enforceable decision. Because of conflicting interests and the seriousness of the issue, the local decision-makers were unable to solve the problem. This situation necessitated the entrance into the controversy of an alien decision-making body which was to make their decision purely on the basis of efficiency and practicality.

To identify a situation is relatively easy, but to investigate such a problem is not an easy task from the standpoint of an adequate methodology. The methodology selected for such an investigation was general systems theory. In order to initiate an investigation via systems theory, it was necessary to define a system. For the purposes of this thesis a system was defined as an

overall pattern of relationships between comparable, but discrete component parts, whose interaction determines the survival of the system. By accepting this definition, it seems apparent that a community of this sort can be classified as a system. A community is characterized by patterns of relationships between comparable but separate groups who interact with each other to assure the continued operation of their community social system.

The highway controversy in Cheyenne was a political matter because it did involve a distribution of advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps, since the problem concerned a political question, an investigation of this type should go a bit further in systems theory. By identifying the community as a political system, the political problem involved can be investigated in its true character. The community is a political system if it is stable, responsive to pressure and change, open, just, structured, and multi-functional. The community which was involved in this instance appeared to be relatively stable, somewhat responsive to pressure (although there seemed to be an overt amount of what might be called western rugged individualism present in Cheyenne), open (by this the author means there was no caste system), just, rigidly structured from a political standpoint, and multifunctional in the area of political activity.

The stability of the political system depends upon the effective interaction of the component units. Such effective interaction is an important determinant of the survival of the political system. Community stability depends upon the effective interaction of its component groups. The Cheyenne incident seems to demonstrate that should effective interaction between community groups be disrupted the overall stability of the community will suffer. Obviously when many of the significant community groups are split as a result of political stress, a stable community will not be the result. Thus, it would seem correct to say that the stability of the community in this situation was shaken, although obviously not destroyed.

A political system will react to stress in order to maintain its equilibrium and insure survival. A community which is subjected to stress will also react in order to maintain or return to a stable situation. The community in this case was subjected to a great deal of stress from the important decision about the highway location. The community decision-makers attempted a solution to the problem in order to return the community to a stable state. However, their efforts were in vain and the stability of the community had to be achieved through the actions of an alien group.

The political system is disturbed by a variety of influences coming from the environment. These influences are present regardless of the stability or fluctuation of the environment. Environmental events which communicate stress to the system are inputs. The system will respond to stress with outputs and inform itself about the outputs from feedback information. The community of Cheyenne was subjected to environmental events which took the form of demands for a solution to the controversy. These demands came from the community members and were directed to the decision-makers. The decision-makers responded with a decision which was a deprivation for some and a reward for others. The elites were informed about the impact of their decision from a variety of groups and leaders who functioned as feedback transmitters.

A community can be viewed as a political system. However, to say that a community is merely a political system is not sufficient for an investigation of this nature. It must be further stated that a community is an open political system because it is subjected to inputs and feedback, and responds with outputs. A community may also be an organic political system if the changes made in response to stress are constant and the interaction of its component parts is viable. The com-

munity of Cheyenne could be classified as an open political system in this instance because it was subjected to inputs from the environment and responded with outputs. The inputs were the demands for a decision and the outputs were the three location proposals. Cheyenne could also be seen as an organic political system as the changes made within the community were constant and the interaction was viable. Throughout the controversy, the demands for a solution were constantly thrust upon the decision-makers. The proposals for solution, in particular the compromise location proposed by the highway department, et al, were also constant throughout the course of the dispute.

A political system tends to naturally assume a position which neutralizes stress while at the same time hoping to maintain the status quo. In other words a political system strives to maintain its equilibrium. It seems obvious that the community leaders during the highway dispute were trying desperately to find a solution to the stress caused by the controversy while at the same time trying to maintain a semblance of the old order. A complete new community environment was not a desired end as maintenance of the status quo is one of the essential elements of community equilibrium.

Any investigation of a political situation of this type is difficult at best from the standpoint of an investigative tool. The case study method was selected as a tool because it was felt that in order to do justice to an inquiry of this sort, accuracy is essential but perfection is impossible. Obviously, a reporter cannot learn everything about a political situation as he must depend upon memories which may be faulty or biased. Written documents are quite another matter. While these documents may lend invaluable assistance to an investigation of this nature, they are incomplete and sometimes unobtainable. With all of the obvious drawbacks, the case study method, it was felt, gave the writer a chance to learn about the inside activity which takes place during a political controversy.

The Cheyenne highway controversy was an actual political situation in which a community political system was subjected to stress and responded to it in ways which were observable. At the outset of the stress, Cheyenne appeared to be a rather stable political system characterized by a great deal of effective interaction between the component units. The system was subjected to stress which took the form of the highway controversy. The system responded with attempts at compromise in order to

alleviate the stress and return to a normal state of equilibrium.

Political activity among the groups which were concerned with one location or the other increased until the community seemed to be politically polarized and in a state of disequilibrium. If this actual political case study can be used as an example, it would appear that community disequilibrium is the natural reaction of a community political system which is subjected to stress from the environment. The community disequilibrium in Cheyenne was characterized by political polarization which prevented the system from returning to the more natural state of equilibrium.

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