CHAPTER 6

Land Inventories for Land Use Planning in Canada

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PERSPECTIVES OF CANADA

Canada covers roughly 10 million sq km, having roughly 755,000 sq km of fresh water. Local conditions vary widely. Topography varies from high rugged mountains to flat lacustrine plains. Climate varies from the high arctic with extensive permafrost to dry prairies to near rainforest. Vegetation ranges from diverse forest communities to sparse desert and tundra. The effects of continental glaciation are present almost everywhere causing a wide diversity of soils and terrain. All of the above must be considered in designing land inventories.

Another factor which affects land use planning is the fact that less than 10% of the land is suitable for agriculture. These areas occur in the south where the greatest population lives. Another factor is political—the ownership, and thus the power of management and planning for resources is largely provincial. The federal government can only affect the uses and management of land indirectly, mostly through taxation, using both incentives and penalties. Another effective method of influencing planning is through the provision of land information, such as that of the Canada Land Inventory (CLI).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Canadians were becoming aware that land and related resources were not infinite. Problems of land use conflict, competition for land, and land misuses were becoming more common. These problems were faced in a series of conferences, particularly the Senate Committee on Land Use in 1958 and the Resources for Tomorrow in 1961.

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Planning Future Land Uses.