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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

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Without exception all readers of "Irregular" read--or even think--something significant from time to time. Can you share it with your friends? Can you send in a few pars? Our "free university" will thrive much better if you do.

### This Issue

1. Can Jane Jacobs defeat the giants?
2. Can Melbourne's size be contained?
3. What is the future for flats?
4. Mexico City versus Surfers Paradise.

### Can Jane Jacobs Defeat The Giants?

(By Ed.)

1/12/8 Jane Jacobs enchants the reader. Her picture of regeneration of urban life and the community life of the street brings out the nostalgia we have for our youthful days, when we were part of a pack of kids playing in our street.

There was life in our street: Rabbits, "Ginger Micks", milkos, bakers, housewives in a group around the Chinese greengrocer, even visiting troubadours.

2/12/8

Today our street is a car thoroughfare. No playing children--they are inside looking at T.V. At the week-ends they are off to the hills or the beaches. The menfolk get their excitement at the local T.A.B. football or race meeting. Shopping is a Saturday morning outing at the super-market.

3/12/8 Jane Jacobs describes the lively and secure community life of a previous run-down area, and, in doing so, gives body blows to the advocates of what she describes as the "Radiant City" visionaries.

In my opinion, she rightly throws the emphasis on people and their activities. She affirms William Morris' dictum: "fellowship is life; lack of fellowship is death". Her basic criticism of Mumford, Le Corbusier and their followers is that they are concerned with order, beauty and planning regardless of the people who have to live in their communities.

This is all very good.

4/12/8 But--And this, to me, is the problem: How do you preserve this community, this life in the local area?

Jane Jacobs suggests methods such as mortgage loans on old houses, promotion of small business, extension of and assistance to diversity (how I'm not sure), the making life difficult for the car driver where necessary, the breakdown of the bureaucratic apparatus of city municipalities to smaller local units.

Is this program geared to the problem?

5/12/8 Surely the forces working against local diversity and vitality are too pervasive, too deep-rooted, for such guerilla warfare!



159

Some of these trends, such as private ownership and speculation in land, which means land is used for purposes apart from people; the production of cars by huge corporations whose only aim is to sell them; the promotion of entertainment on the largest possible scale---surely these are giants in the way of local vitality ?

I'm all for Jane's city. But let us see and recognise the real difficulties in getting into it.

(Note: our contributor Ed. is not Ed. Clark and he is not the editor)

Can Melbourne's Size Be Contained  
By Development of "The North"?

(By "Alpha")

6/12/8

Those who think so should read the book "Struggle for the North" by J.H. Kelly, Australian Book Society 1966, Price \$4.50. This work proves by book, chapter and verse the horrifying reality that Australia has been selling "a bit of the farm", long before we recently began to give away our minerals. The primitive wasteful cattle-raising methods of Vestey's, and other U.K and U.S absentee owners and their opposition to all reform has had disastrous results---all with Commonwealth Government consent.

The main part of the book however is concerned with the maximum development of all economic potentials of the far north. One-time unofficial advisor to Prime Ministers, the author has spent years in specialist on-the-spot studies of the beef industry including rail and "beef road" transport in the north. He deals also with northern mineral wealth, water resources, and aborigines. He was also one of the first to recommend and campaign for the Snowy Mountains scheme

What follows here is not a review of the book. It is a few comments on some implications for long-range planning aspects for the south---in particular for Melbourne  
7/12/8

Pre-war annual average beef consumption was 140 lb. per person. Now it is 110 lb. (Do more Australians now eat fish and spaghetti ?) Kelly says: "A human population of 30 million by the end of the century would consume the total production of 25 million head of beef and dairy cattle leaving none for export" (pp 27-28)

8/12/8 But this 25 million head per year is based on "full beef ~~production~~ potential" which requires, says Kelly, resumption of the absentee cattle lands, their leasing out to smaller economic holdings to resident leasees with adequate public investment, but with strictly-policed conditions for high standards of cattle and pasture husbandry.

9/12/8 Kelly deals in a very sober fashion and with careful costing with several grandiose schemes which have captured the public imagination but are either not economically feasible, or if they are, should have very low priority. For example: the Bradfield scheme for turning eastern-flowing rivers back over the Divide to flow west, had a technical difficulty. A modified Bradfield scheme by Nimmo costed in 1947 would have required an outlay of \$24 per acre foot as against \$1 per acre foot for water development in Victoria or N.S.W. Kelly says such costs are not justified (p112)

He is very dubious about the prospects of the full Ord River scheme costing about \$40<sup>million</sup> without proper testing



of the smaller "pilot farm" project. He considers the nation could get infinitely greater benefit from his own scheme costing \$36 m. for full cattle-property resumption and re-development. (pp 180-184). He soberly explains that even with "full beef potential" the "far north" would supply only 46% of beef against "inside Queensland" i.e south-eastern Queens. potential of 54%

10/12/8 With quiet irony he says: "Because of the preponderance of emotional arguments in favour of northern development (in ~~the~~ terms of a 'yellow peril' or of the ~~undesirability~~ undesirability of large cities) it is difficult to present a case which will be heeded by those who have become sceptical of the emotional case" (p 176) (Our emphasis)

That brings us to the point we wish to underline. Those who hope beyond hope that somehow, sometime grand "national developments" if not in Victoria, then somewhere else in Australia, will enable us to prevent the rapid growth of Melbourne will derive cold comfort from Kelly. Though admitting it is difficult to estimate, he makes an attempt at projecting the total population increase of the remote north which would follow full development of the potential:- (p 179)

Pastoral	25,000
Agricultural	12,000
Mineral	25,000
Secondary	10,000
Tertiary	20,000
Increase in all northern towns because of secondary economic effect e.g Darwin, Mt Isa, Alice Springs, Wyndham etc.	73,000
	<hr/>
	165,000
Existing Population:	
White 100,000	
Aboriginal 35,000	
	<hr/>
	135,000
	<hr/>
Total Potential Population	300,000
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As Kelly has a special section on the development of chronic pockets of unemployment in Queensland (p.191), it is hard to see how Melbourne's growth is going to be affected at all by the slogan "go north young man"

11/12/8 Coming nearer to home and more productive areas, in a footnote (p.95) Kelly happens to mention that the population increase of the Murrumbidgee irrigation development made possible by the \$900 m. Snowy River scheme increased from 500 to 30,000

The number of extra jobs (outside of Victoria) created or which could be created by these two big national schemes (the one a fact, the other to be struggled for) is as follows:-

Murrumbidgee	29,500
Far North	165,000
	<hr/>
	194,500

12/12/8 Our conclusion Assume that every extra single job created were taken by someone migrating from Melbourne. Our population would be reduced by less than 200,000: about two Geelong. But it would take 25 new Geelong to hold Melbourne at 2 1/2 million. Lets face it ! We are "in" for a city twice the size. Lets make the most of it.



## What Is the Future For Flats ?

161

(Some comments on the booklet "A Study in Land Usage")

13/12/8 This informative booklet was produced by the Housing Industry Association (H.I.A) in January 1968, and should rank along with the MMBW report, the TCPB report, the TCPA report and the A.L.P "Role of Townplanning", as one of the serious studies which Local Government Minister had before him.

The H.I.A has a "Land Usage Committee" including among others: N.G. Crowley, Director of HIA's Economic Research Dept., G.J. Hill of C.H.I., Daryl Jackson (Small Homes Service of RVIA), W.B. Kennedy (in charge of CSIRO Division of building research), and Dr F.W. Ledger and K.A. Rasmussen (Both of Uni. of Melb Dept of Town and Regional Planning)

14/12/8 The two most profound theses dealt with are:-

1. A different concept of housing densities to MMBW
2. An analysis of reasons for skyrocketing land prices

We will deal with the first of these in this issue, leaving land prices and other items until later.

The HIA forward points out that neither the MMBW or the TCPB reports considered "other than incidentally" the prospective pattern of building.

15/12/8 You may recall that although the TCPB's report was silent, the MMBW report did give figures of potential redevelopment, both in what it defined as "the redevelopment area" and in the built-up area outside of it. ("the redevelopment area" includes the inner "central sector" areas i.e. Melb. Fitzroy, Codrington, Richmond, Sth Melb and Port Melb. within about 5 miles of GPO, plus strips along the rail-lines approx. 10 miles from GPO, the two combined constituting buildings completed approximately before 1920)

It also laid down a few density conceptions. 8000 acres of the central sector were to be developed at densities of 130-160 per acre to house an extra 500,000 and another 100,000 within the redevelopment area (but outside the central sector) were to be developed at densities averaging 30 per acre.

Although there is no direct clue from the MMBW report, it would seem that its concept of "central sector" redevelopment at densities averaging 145 per acre are based on typical Housing Commission estate densities which currently includes "high-rise" amongst four-storey walk-ups. Presumably, outside of this central sector, but within the "redevelopment area" the MMBW's contemplated density of only 30 per acre had in mind private flat development.

16/12/8 The HIA report says "---there is one major influence of rather recent development--the accent on flats---"  
"---the growth in flat construction is not ephemeral and in the foreseeable future--the number of flats constructed each year is likely to equal or even exceed the number of new houses" The only factors they see as likely to modify this trend are 1. more realistic home finance, and 2. reducing the cost of residential building blocks.

The report says a conservative estimate is 500,000 flats in 33 years housing 1,250,000, leaving a net addition of 1 million after off-setting displaced persons. This estimate is ~~550,000 more~~ 300,000 more people accommodated by re-development than the MMBW's total of 700,000.

It is pointed out that on basis of current Melb. and Sydney figures average flat density (presumably private flats) is some 6 times that of normal house blocks

17/12/8 The Building Research Division of the CSIRO is soon to release projections of housing figures into which the changing balance between flats and houses construction



has been built. It is said that this will show that there is much greater scope within the present residential area for population growth than is generally supposed.

From this it follows that the MMBW's "estimated land requirements could be much more than adequate", and another interesting observation is made that, as at the year 2000, 850,000 of the increased population will be under the age of 15 and won't require extra housing, (although they will need it later)

18/12/8 Comprehensive planning in advance to accomodate this predicted widespread flat building is urged. There is an appeal that restrictive procedures should not be followed and there is a hint elsewhere that municipal regulations are more important than either construction methods or market fashions in determining the extent of flat construction.

19/12/8 On the next page we have prepared tables in which the MMBW projections and the HIA projections are compared side by side so that the extent of the differences can be grasped quantitatively.

Unfortunately an exact direct point to point comparison is not possible because HIA created different categories to the MMBW. Thus, instead of "the redevelopment area" of 32,000, it has "inner urban areas" of 23,000 acres. Consequently as the "inner" areas are differently defined, so also are the built-up intermediate suburban areas capable of redevelopment.

20/12/8 Nevertheless, the figures are so disparant that the difference in emphasis is glaring. For example:-

	<u>Inner Areas</u>	
	<u>9 Inner Suburbs</u>	<u>Increased Population</u>
HIA	22,768 acres	317,542
	<u>6 Inner Suburbs</u>	
MMBW	8,000 acres	500,000
	<u>Built-Up Areas</u>	
HIA		539,867
MMBW		100,000

In the built-up areas therefor, even allowing for the difference in areas, the real ration must be 3 or 4 times extra population in the HIA figures over the MMBW figures. And for the inner areas, the HIA would house very much fewer, and at much lower densities therefor.

21/12/8 Our Comment If the HIA and CSIRO projections of vastly increased flat-dwelling are scientific as trends, then it is welcome news. Provided more and more people express a desire for high-density homes when given a modern and reasonably-priced option, then it will decrease the terrible isolation, the thankless commuting, and the deteriorating cultural and social fabric caused by the urban sprawl. We agree with the HIA recommendations that no obstacles be placed in the way of this process.

However in our opinion if this trend is true, then the HIA material (no less than the TCPB or MMBW) is deficient because it does not consider what ought to be.

(Note: continued on p.8 --next page for tables)



H.I.A. & M.M.B.W. --- TWO COMPONENTS OF REDEVELOPMENT AT HIGHER DENSITIES

Housing Industry Association				Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works			
Sector	Acres	Increased Population	Density Present (Future)	Sector	Acres	Increased Population	Density (Future)
Inner Urban Areas	22,768	317,542	16.05 (30)	Redev. in "Redev. Area"	8,000	500,000	(130-160)
					Central (ii)		
					10 Miles along rail	100,000	(30)
						600,000	300,000
Intermediate Suburbs	67,842	539,867	12.04 (20)	Redev. outside "Redev. Area"	?	100,000	Nil
Developing Suburbs	199,381	1,202,032	3.97 (10)	New Development	?	2,070,000	800,000
Lightly Developed Areas	150,419	713,974	.46 (3)(6) & (8)				
		Total new		Total new		2,770,000	Total new
		Present		Present		2,230,000	Present
		5,000,000		5,000,000			2,000,000

(i) Melbourne, Fitzroy, Collingwood, Richmond, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Prahan, St. Kilda, Brunswick  
 (ii) Melbourne, Fitzroy, Collingwood, Richmond, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne



22/12/8 Indeed, the whole context of the article leaves the inescapable impression that uppermost in the mind of the author was the future of private enterprise

Now, we can understand that: after all it is no doubt one of the purposes of the Association to advance the interests of all those organisations connected with ~~the~~ the private sector of the building industry. Neither the Housing Commission nor State or Commonwealth Works Depts. for example seem to be represented (anyway on the "Land Usage Committee") of the HIA.

But as a public document, it does not, in our opinion, exhibit quite that degree of public concern which, if included, would have made it so ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ much more valuable.

23/12/8 Thus the statement is made early in the article: "It is therefor clear that, even ignoring the massive redevelopment of the inner city to hold 500,000 more people as proposed by the MMBW, private redevelopment through flat construction over a wide area of Melbourne will greatly increase population densities". And from that point onwards any potential Housing Commission redevelopment is ignored, right to the end of the article. None of the statistics take it into account.

There is no discussion as to why higher density is socially desirable, no discussion of the needs for public housing for low income groups, no advocacy of greatly expanded Commission building.

In fact, one could gather from the article that the Commission's very existence would fade out, because the average density even for the innermost areas is set at 30 per acre, as against the MMBW (and Commission) at 130-160 per acre. Apparently, the HIA's concept of redevelopment is a near-monopoly for private enterprise.

In another article, indeed, the Commission is mentioned, but only in the context of a gloomy statement that it would take to 2000 A.D for the Commission to acquire and ~~demolish~~ demolish even 800 acres, let alone actually renew the 8,000 acres in the MMBW plan. The strong ~~impression~~ impression that the writer doesn't want the Commission ~~isxx~~ ~~confirmed by another statement that~~ ~~renewal cannot be carried through without "joint enterprise" of the Commission and private industry as at Hotham Gardens.~~ ~~This is tantamount to saying that the Commission should do the "dirty work" of acquiring properties, which private industry hasn't the power to do.~~

24/12/8 Our Conclusion: The HIA estimates of what private enterprise are likely to achieve by way of higher density all over Melbourne should be coupled with a massive Commission rehabilitation and redevelopment in inner areas. (Later issue of Irregular will deal with other HIA aspects)

Mexico City Versus Surfers Paradise

An apology to our readers. We promised on p.1 to carry this item in this issue. But we have already exceeded a reasonable size. Watch out for it next time under the heading "Mexico City versus the City of Melbourne" (We warned you in the first issue we were irregular)

A special apology to Jonathon who turned in the newsclip for publication a few months ago.