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2/40/71

Challenge in the School Ground

In the February issue of School Bell (the official journal of the Victorian Council of School Organisations) Mrs Ruth Hoadley has written an article on school playgrounds. Here are some interesting quotations.

"Parents committees in schools have provided, when they could afford it, fixed metal suspension playground equipment.... Most school grounds reflect the hard work of the parents Very few schools, however, have nooks where a child may sit, undisturbed by the hurly burly, where a group may build a cubby or sail a pirate ship. or where the timid may learn to risk a tumble in climbing or balancing.

" Mr. Jim Hobill of the Physical Education Branch (eastern division) discussed some of the possibilities of providing a stimulating environment out of doors... Included in the grounds could be a half-acre or so shaped into interesting hillocks and winding paths and closely planted with trees and shrubs...

"There would be places for climbing trees or ropes on trees or frames. balance areas with logs or stepping stones, areas for jumping off into sand, fort constructions, tunnels, digging areas, places to make tracks for model cars and small games. There could be barbeques and rustic tables and seats!..

"Mr Hobill said that the staff of the Phys. Ed. branch are pleased to be invited to schools to advise on the possibilities offered by each particular site"

Mrs Hoadley concludes her article with this paragraph " Planning is the key. In one school, children as well as the staff and committee have given thought to the planning. The children have made a papier - mache model of the contours they would like and added a fort and an Indian village..... it does not necessarily cost a great deal to make a school ground a much more interesting and challenging place."

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2/40/71

Trade Unions and Planning!

Trade Unions are beginning to take up issues of a broader social and political significance than the usual wages and conditions questions!

Some of the unions have joined in conservation issues, helping to prevent treated sewage effluent being discharged into Port Phillip Bay and helping to stop the laying of an oil pipe line under the Bay. They have joined in action against the Gardens restaurant and for the saving of the Little Desert. They have put black-bans on ill-conceived Housing Commission projects. In February Mr Norm Gallagher was jailed for his action in picketing railway land in Carlton!

The intervention of police and other authorities is far more likely when unions venture into such fields!

(Trade Unions and Planning continued)

The incidents which took place over the Carlton Railway land have raised the question of the right of unions to take a stand on town planning matters. This whole question has to be argued out not only in the ranks of the Trade Unions but also by the membership of local organisations concerned with planning.

Only through such discussion will the Trade Union movement be able to take its rightful place in areas from which it has long been excluded. Although there are some favourable conditions for more effective action by trade unions in these new fields, such action will be very limited unless a new type of conviction can overcome the conservatism and lack of initiative which has become the tradition in some unions.

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A Comment on the Carlton Railway Land

by Alpha.

Mr. Hamer has challenged the Melbourne City Council to produce a proper town plan for the city with public participation before the Council proceeds making major planning decisions such as the Victoria Market site, the Flinders Street Station area and so on.

But how about Mr Hamer's Government contributing its share to the M.C.C. planning by ceasing to make unilateral and piece-meal decisions such as rejecting McAlpine's scheme for redevelopment of Latrobe Street and permitting Railways to build warehouses for private enterprise at Carlton ?

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3/40/71 The Happy Valley Story.... Latest Developments!

For the history of Happy Valley see Irregular 34 (July 1970) Since that date (over the Christmas holiday period) the butcher's shop (Horrie's) has been demolished and so also has the Fish and Chip Shop. (note over the Christmas holiday period in 1969..70 the laundrette and hairdressers shops were demolished... is the holiday period a particularly favourable time for demolitions by the H.C.V.?

Work has begun on the building of an arcade of small shops behind the Haines St. H.C.V. shops. For this arcade to be built land has been taken from the H.C.V. tenants. The shops will be within a few feet of the windows of the H.C.V. flats (which were built in the early 1950s and not designed to have other buildings so close). The cost of the arcade is \$93,000.

In commenting on protests over the new shops (which will not include the Happy Valley Self Service Grocery) Mr Gaskin said (Sunday Observer January 31) "We are able to offer the shopkeepers an exclusive franchise for the area which means we are able to ask more rent."

Mr. Bruno D'Anna (The Happy Valley Self Service Grocer) has received a reply from a letter he wrote to the H.C.V. late in 1969. His letter asked that he be able to build shops or a shop on the land which he at that time owned in Happy Valley. The Commission have told him that his shop is to be acquired and that no shop will be provided for him in the new arcade.

So.. in North Melbourne the H.C.V. planning is resulting in

- (a) shops where the people have said they do not want them!
- (b) demolition of shops which the people have said they do want!
- (d) Shops with exclusive franchise so that high rents can be charged
- (e) Demolition of shop which provide competitive prices.
- (d) The spending of \$93,000 by the H.C.V.
- (e) The refusal to allow a shopkeeper to invest in his own shop or shops
- (f) The destruction of gardens around tenanted flats
- (g) the list could go on and on but this page is at an end!.....

4/40/ 7I

A Car Budget.

"Few motorists take the trouble to calculate their motoring budget. Yet as it accounts for one quarter of many families' incomes, a full appreciation of where the money goes and what holes can be plugged is important." From Woman's Day Sept 21 1970!

In the article a car budget is examined. The figures show that for one car the overhead works out at 7.1 cents a mile, and the running costs amount to 3.7 cents a mile. A typical six cylinder late model car driven 10,000 miles a year cost \$1,077 a year.. Items listed include petrol, depreciation, interest, comprehensive insurance, third party insurance, maintenance and repairs, tyres and tubes, oil and polish and a very small amount for miscellaneous .. fines, garage etc.

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5/40/ 7I An Examination of Three New Acts of the Victorian Government

In Irregular Number 38 an appeal was made for contributions on a number of topical issues. "Beta" has responded with an examination of 3 new Acts (The Environment Protection Act; the Western Port Steel Works Act and the Land Conservation Act) Beta is mainly concerned with how the various authorities are constituted. Readers are invited to comment on these Acts.

The Environment Protection Act!

All those concerned about pollution and conservation will agree with the broad aims and objects of the Environment Protection Bill and will commend the Victorian Parliament for recognizing the need for such legislation.

However, it will be noted that the Bill does not set out a policy on environment protection; its main emphasis is on prohibiting activities likely to cause pollution.

The preparation of an environment protection policy and the setting of the standards to be observed is left to the Environment Protection Council, an advisory committee of public servants experts who are not directly responsible to the public. The need for the advice of experts from a wide variety of branches of knowledge to be available in developing policy and standards is clear to all but the growing trend towards government by expert public servants to the detriment of responsible government should not be continued in this body.

I consider that the Environment Protection Council as constituted in the Bill will provide excellent professional and technical advice but it will not have the benefit of direct expressions of the wishes and needs of the general public. Therefore, I suggest that the Environment Protection Council should be comprised of several representatives of the general public, several from municipal councils, conservation groups and primary producers' organisations as well as representatives of the Chamber of Manufacturers and of the Trades Hall Council (compare with the notes on the composition of the Land Conservation Council.. see later)

The Environment Protection Council should be required to hold public hearings at which the public and experts submit their views before declaring policy in respect of an area or a segment of the environment. This method has been adopted in U.S.A. Canada and the United Kingdom with useful results in increased public interest and understanding of what is being done.

Some other improvements to the Bill which should be considered. First, so that public interest in the environment is encouraged, the Environment Protection Authority, the executive body created by the

(Environment Protection Bill Continued)

Bill, should be directed to establish an Information and Education Division co-operating with schools, adult education groups and in particular conservation groups interested in conducting out-door study centres. The latter could assist the Authority's research program.

Secondly, more emphasis should be given in the Bill to co-operation with other States and the Commonwealth in the protection of the environment ... for example the Murray River.

Western Port Steel Works (Development Control) Act.

This Act was rushed through in the last days of the Spring sitting of Parliament. This very short Act is to validate permits which were given under the Town and Country Planning Act 1961. The permits were invalid because they were issued in respect of areas which were not in the boundaries of the Shire of Hastings and of the Western Port Regional Authority.

The areas wrongly included in the permit were those of Western Port which are to be developed by John Lysaght (Australia) Ltd. These areas contain 2000 acres of tidal flats and mangrove swamps which team with plant and wild life and make an important contribution to the ecological balance of the whole Western Port Bay area, by providing breeding grounds for fish, seals, and wild birds including penguins. Similar areas near the ESSO, BHP plant are already being engulfed by "solid filling" dumped by builders etc (see Herald II. 12. '70)

The Act in its concluding section authorizes the establishment and operation of a steel works to be operated day and night seven days a week.

One is tempted to wonder whether the objection and appeal provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act has been circumvented so far as the Western Port waters are concerned. Perhaps also the functions of such advisory bodies as the State Development Committee, Land Conservation Council and Environment Protection Council have been side stepped

Land Conservation Act.

The Act established a Land Conservation Council the functions of which are to make investigations and recommendations concerning the use of public land, so as to provide for the balanced use of land in Victoria. In addition, the Council can make recommendations concerning both public and private land, which should be used as a water supply catchment area. However, it is noted that the Council can only investigate those areas if the Minister approves; he must also approve the nature of the investigation.

These recommendations are to be made to the Minister for Lands, who is required to give 14 days notice to the Minister in charge of any other Department or public authority, which is affected, before forwarding the recommendation to the Governor in Council. Once this approval is given, the recommendation must be carried out.

Every recommendation must be tabled in both Houses of Parliament within 14 days of being submitted to the Minister.

It remains to be seen whether this will be an effective means of restoring vitality to a recommendation which has been rejected by the Minister.

There are two novel and interesting features in the Act. First the Land Conservation Council can, if the Minister approves, enter into arrangements with universities and other bodies or persons to carry out investigations.

Secondly, the Council is required to give public notice by newspaper advertisement of a proposed investigation before it is commenced and submissions by persons and/or bodies may be made and

(The Land Conservation Act Continued)

are to be considered by the Council.

In addition, a report of an investigation, when published, is to open for objections from public, government departments or public authorities for a further 60 days.

The Act lists various matters which are to be taken into account in making investigations and recommendations.... preservation of ecologically significant areas, areas of natural beauty or historical interest, and the creation of areas for leisure and recreation in particular, close to cities and towns. The Council is also to keep in mind the provisions of national parks and reserves for fish, wild life and native plants.

The Land Conservation Council will have 12 members including a part-time chairman. Eight of the twelve are full time public servants and the other three are to be experienced in conservation techniques. Two of these three to be selected from a panel of five submitted by the Conservation Council of Victoria (a federation of all the conservation groups in the State).

It is interesting to note that the Government has accorded recognition to a community organisation such as this and it is to be hoped that this recognition will be continued when other similar bodies are set up.

The Environment Protection Act, which was rushed through in the pre-Christmas rush of legislation, and the Port Phillip Authority Act do set up similar bodies... viz.. the Environment Protection Council and the Port Phillip Advisory Council. However these Councils have only minimal representation of the public mostly through municipal councils and are virtually dominated by public servants.

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6/40/ '70

Deck Housing (Some Quotes from Paul Ritter)

The current fashion is to condemn all forms of high rise dwellings. This is understandable because few of us have any knowledge of multi story flats other than those built by the H.C.V. or by Beller. But do high rise buildings always result in an unsatisfactory living environment? Can the disadvantages of the "vertical" character of high rise be ~~overcome~~ minimised by designing multi story flats which are based on creating a "horizontal" neighbourhood, through the creation of decks in the sky?+

Before he came to Australia, Cr. Paul Ritter of Perth, made a study of two examples of deck housing. Here are some quotes from his study. (by quoting out of context from a study which is now some years old we run the risk of over simplifying a very complicated study, nevertheless what Cr. Ritter wrote has such current significance, and as we now only have access to a series of quotes, we give you some his his gens)

Cr. Ritter made a study of Gallerij Bow at Rotterdam which was built in 1922 and of Parkhill in Sheffield built in 1958.

In writing of the Rotterdam building Ritter says "The most valid and valuable part of the survey must be the observation section and the expressions of the inhabitants. These do suggest that in Rotterdam the intentions of the architects, which are assumed, that the decks will allow social gatherings and children's play, is still being fulfilled as it was: was at the outset to judge by the illustrations. These functions cannot be fulfilled by the traditional blocks of flats built as standard municipal housing in Rotterdam"

"At Park Hill, in place of the 4 foot wide balcony serving every floor, promenade decks . . . ten foot wide, open to the air and provided every third floor form a complete system of circulation around the whole site..... the decks form the function of streets along which prams can be pushed; milk trolley vans can be driven. Being covered from the weather the decks are in fact an extension of the dwellings so far as both children and adults are concerned.

"From the reaction of people it seems that deck housing has the good qualities which allow those who want privacy to be more private and those who seek contact, to have that".