

pollution are the by-products of the technological power that the modern city enshrines. It is to be hoped that the Vancouver conference will point up the classic functions of the city which tend to be submerged in the wake of today's headlong urban development. These include the preservation of the citizen's identity in an organic social setting, personal safety, the opportunity to participate in community affairs, cultural amenities and aesthetic satisfaction, recreation, privacy and peace. Prior to most of all of these is equality of access to basic amenities such as drinking water and transport.

IN A world where the exploding population is causing urban settlements to double and re-double in size, the narrow economic factors that originally located settlements become increasingly irrelevant. Further economic factors bypass considerations like social convenience, turning, say, a modest seaport town into a megalopolis in a few decades. Unfettered economic forces ignore the danger to environments and precipitate decay. To correct this, development policy will have to abandon the policy of giving economic growth free rein at the cost of social and biological considerations.

The effective use of space involves farsighted planning of new settlement areas in relation to population projections, migrations from countryside to town, the urban-rural relationship



and the tendency of one region to flourish at another's cost. Like any major project, the siting and expansion of settlements has an economic multiplier effect which planners must take into account. But the biggest challenge facing the planners is the

possibility of viewing the location of settlements as a policy objective rather than as the residual result of other development policies like the siting of industry and the laying down of highways. The Vancouver conference may help to shift the perspective from one priority to another.

The home being the setting of the biological unit, the family, the spreading blight of slums and shantytowns threatens the very foundations of the individual's security. The house is the basic component of the settlement, but there is no one formula governing its construction. In



warm countries where a bamboo hut is adequate shelter an amenity like piped water deserves higher priority than the provision of brick walls and a tile roof. But the disparity in housing specifications does not diminish the fact of the vast backlog in housing the world over. Even when the necessary capital is forthcoming, the resultant housing may be functionally inefficient. Unplanned development can destroy the neighbourhood concept and generally ignores civic amenities. Provision of amenities, made accessible by public transport, is one of the ways people living in the countryside can be dissuaded from migrating to the city. The worldwide tendency for population to become concentrated in a few big cities can be counteracted by imaginative regional decentralization. This has been achieved in some of the smaller developed countries.

In cities the world over, public transport has lost out to the private vehicle, which is indirectly subsidised. The resulting traffic congestion combined with the high-rise development of city centres has tended to debar the underprivileged from the cultural

hub of the metropolis while the suburban sprawl around it has equally deprived them of the countryside. Beyond a certain point, cities conforming to this pattern outgrow the possibility of regeneration in the sense that no amount of urban renewal can make them livable again.

THE picture of urban development around the world is complicated by the pace of change and the variety of functions a given area must fill in response to successive waves of demand. The earth may be compared to a disturbed anthill. The biggest single source of human suffering resulting from this instability is the mushrooming of squatters' colonies around the developing world's cities. The mass migrations from the countryside that create these colonies reflect the diminishing availability of land and employment in the context of a growing rural population. These squatters or "urban pioneers" are quickly disillusioned. Their conditions can be bettered partly by their own efforts and partly by a brand of planning which gives high priority to employment, income distribution and housing. Migrant communities must be sited near employment opportunities. But many recent migrations have produced ghettos of workers from economically less favoured areas who fill relatively low-paid, unskilled jobs. Socially they resemble the shantytown squatters of developing countries. These movements leave behind them a countryside drained of vitality. To reverse or check such movements countervailing attractions, like reformed land tenure, have to be deliberately fostered: there is no automatic cure. A prosperous countryside retains its population and may also be a tourist draw, although tourism too must be regulated to avert another kind of lopsided development.

Unplanned settlement produced by uncontrolled economic growth tends to produce unacceptable living conditions. An effective policy involves control over the use of land as well as all other major resources. Zoning and other controls are needed to forestall land speculation and the resultant loss of amenities that her-

Continued on page 19