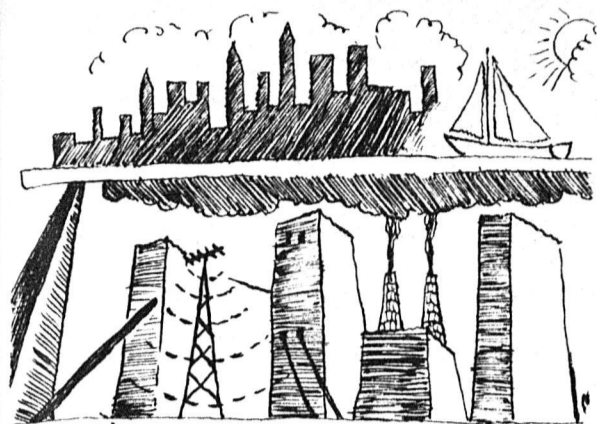


The Future of Canadian Cities,



(Boyce
Richardson,
Toronto:
New Press,
1972, \$7.95)

Discussions of the urban situation generally tend toward the apocalyptic. The city is a concrete prison full of poison gases and too many robot-like people. In comparison Boyce Richardson is almost optimistic. He takes a careful rational look at the concept of the city and as the title of his book indicates, he believes that there is a future for Canadian cities. The quality of this future depends upon the action taken by citizens now. We must "face the pressures of urbanization from a secure base: a firm perception of the nature of the existing city." Richardson's basic definition of a city involves, of course, a high density population. The significant factor in his image of the city is that citizens and the physical structures would not be considered mutually exclusive entities. There is an organic interdependence of people and institutions, such as parks, schools, downtown and recreational facilities.

Richardson attributes the continuing disintegration of American cities to an over-application of the principles of individualism. The goals of the private (and generally rich capitalistic) citizen cannot be placed above the goals of the general public. I talked to Richardson last week when he was through Edmonton. He admitted that his is an idealistic view and rather left of centre. However he mentioned that the response he has received on talk-shows across Canada indicates a general support for his ideas among the people most affected by urban development. Richardson has constructed an argument that proves that such a concept of a city is not impossible though it does involve a certain amount of basic change in the economic structures of society. A more egalitarian system is needed. However, Richardson demonstrates that the changes required are hardly radical. Pointing to the 1970 FRAP confrontation with the city of Montreal, Richardson states that "with the exception of the proposal for free urban transportation there was nothing in it that has not been tried successfully in other cities in other countries."

Basic to Richardson's argument is the idea that the city is for people. City expenditures should go toward upgrading the kind of life possible for those people who centre their lives in an urban environment. This does not mean that city budgets must be stretched to cover more and more elaborate white elephants like Expo or even smaller elephants like domed stadiums and convention centres. These structures, which we so euphemistically refer to as 'urban renewal', do nothing to revitalize a city. In fact, they drain the city's financial and environmental resources. The central area of a city seems to be dying so city planners just scrape it away to make room for

monuments to the arts and gigantic commercial complexes. These are used by a very small portion of the population. Meanwhile the urban poor who used to live there are transplanted to pre-fab slums, euphemistically termed "public housing" with the definite implication of social inferiority. Richardson is not a barbarian out to vandalize the National Arts Centre but he has focused on a flaw in our urban planning that I too must reluctantly recognize. Less elaborate single arts centres and Olympic stadiums could mean more smaller facilities. The main point is that these public institutions should be public, that is, readily accessible by all.

The question of accessibility leads Richardson into a complete investigation of the transit problems of a large city. His ideal solution is free urban transit with a concentrated use of rapid transit. Efficient public transportation is a necessity in a city. It should be ranked beside public health and medicare as a public expense. Cars are so detrimental to the environment that their cost to society far outstrips the price tag on the vehicle itself. Perhaps they ought to be taxed. Surely emission control devices should be mandatory. Richardson's discussion of transit is particularly apt for persons concerned with Edmonton's future.

Walking through CAB, without really counting, I noticed at least five signs offering land for sale. "Return to the Land" the people chorus as the quality of urban life decays. These people think they are escaping to an idyllic rural life. They drive their Land Rover to their pre-fab transplanted urban house. Marie Antoinette at Trianon! They fancy themselves ecologically aware but they have managed to ignore the fact that the city is an environment too. Boyce Richardson does not think there are any easy answers. He examines various alternatives in Sweden, Britain and Holland. Some of these ideas could work for us. Canada is still in a position to develop her cities in a rational humanistic manner and avoid the problems plaguing other nations. We already have urban sprawl through Southern Ontario. We certainly have a bureaucracy specializing in 'how not to do it' but Richardson maintains that Canadians have a predisposition to a concern for public welfare exhibited in our medicare schemes. Richardson's book is written in a very plain style. He avoids the complicated jargon of the city planners. His aim is to communicate with the people that live in cities and convince them that they can and must take steps to ensure that our future cities are viable social entities and not prisons. "The Future of Canadian Cities" is a very readable book and one that should be read.

Terri Moore

SUB ACTIVITIES FOR YOU

ARTS & CRAFTS - 3rd floor

- register for January classes NOW!
see Lesley Drewoth behind Info Desk

- GLAZE WORKSHOP by John Shalke - DECEMBER 15, 16, 17, - class
see Lesley Drewoth behind Info Desk

MUSIC LISTENING - main floor east

- have you tried this service yet?

ROOM AT THE TOP - 7th floor

- MONDAY to FRIDAY - daily food service from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30th - Free Film Night - 8:00 p.m. - National Film Board Films - "Citizen Harold" and "A Sad Song Of Yellow Skin"

- FRIDAY and SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1st and 2nd - 8:00 p.m. - "Sparky Rucker plays the Blues". \$1.00 at the door, 75 cents in advance

- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd - 9:00 p.m. - Studio Albany Part Two presents "Hot Cottage" \$1.00 at the door, 75 cents in advance.

- MONDAY, DECEMBER 4th - 8:00 p.m. - U of A Jazz Ensemble \$1.00 at the door

THEATRE 2nd floor

- THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30th - 7:00 p.m. - Forums present Andy Russell and his film "Grizzly Country" Students 50 cents, General Public \$1.00

- FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1st - 3:00 p.m. - Free - Forums presents Andy Russell speaking on "Conservation Of The Environment"

- FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1st - 6:30 and 9:00 p.m. - Student Cinema - "Husbands" \$1.00 at the door, 50 cents in advance.

- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd - 6:30 and 9:00 p.m. - Student Cinema - "Patton" \$1.00 at the door, 50 cents in advance

- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd - 3:30 p.m. - U of A Concert Band. Adults \$1.50, children 75 cents.

- MONDAY, DECEMBER 4th - 8:00 p.m. Members only - Edmonton Film Society - "Double Suicide At Amijima"

GALLERY PRINT RENTALS - main floor

- TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5th to DECEMBER 18th - "Arts and Crafts of Old Quebec" - a photography exhibit supplied by the National Film Board

STUDENT CINEMA

6:30 & 9:00

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

**"Husbands
is a great,
important film!"**

—JAY COCKS, TIME



AL RUBAN and SAM SHAW Present

**SEN GAZZARA
PETER FALK
JOHN CASSAVETES
HUSBANDS**

Produced by AL RUBAN Associate Producer SAM SHAW Written and Directed by JOHN CASSAVETES

FROM COLUMBIA PICTURES

GP

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

**"A war movie
for people
who hate
war movies!"**

—Rex Reed,
Holiday Magazine

20th
CENTURY FOX
presents

PATTON

A FRANK McCARTHY-
FRANKLIN J. SCHAFFNER
PRODUCTION

Tickets \$.50 in advance
\$1.00 at the door