

River valley future explored by committee

The following is an article contained in a recent publication by the River Valley Action Committee.

A moratorium on further development in the North Saskatchewan river valley was called for at a conference at the university last weekend.

A four-day conference also produced a proposal for the establishment of an authority to guide the future development of the valley.

The proposal to be brought before city council on Monday and presented later to the provincial government, was one of several made by the River Valley Action Committee.

The committee was the creation of more than 30 people who attended the conference, which attracted a wide range of suggestions for future use of the river valley.

An alternative suggestion was that the valley be placed under a trusteeship to ensure that the development of historical sites in the valley be continued.

Until such an institution has been established, the committee urges the provincial and civic governments to halt further development in the river valley.

Basic principles passed include that the river valley not be used for an east-west urban transportation roadway corridor.

"The most devastating intrusions into the valley lands have been roadways and public utilities," states the brief to be sent both Mayor Dent and Premier Lougheed.

"The present Municipal Act specifically allows such intrusions by excluding them from the standard provisions of the zoning bylaws.

Among the alternative uses put forth include hiking, riding and cross-country skiing trails, boating and swimming.

One suggestion was a trail along the top of river bank with "benches, tea-houses and pubs." Another was that canals be built along the river for boating areas.

The Committee also urged that natural, biological, and historical aspects of the valley be maintained and developed for both Edmontonians and visitors.

Residents should be given money and resources to design, develop and maintain their park and recreational facilities to ensure that their needs are met.

This "would ensure the humanization of such facilities and therefore prevent the violent developments that have happened in other cities."

We make much of the fact that the North Saskatchewan River Valley is a distinctive feature of the city of Edmonton. It is big. It is beautiful. But what is most important, it runs through the city of Edmonton diagonally from one corner to another. Its twelve major tributary ravines provide parkland to dozens of communities within the city boundary from South West to North East.

Unfortunately, in planning, preserving or developing this resource and the ravine system, we do not seem to have understood it as just that - a system. Geologically, the valley and the ravines are part of an ecological, living system of a mature river, with its flats and cliffs formed from earlier meanders. The deep-cut tributary ravines from couloirs, draining the large sloughs and banks which once entirely covered much of the present developed Edmonton.

The Valley features no longer form a natural system in the way they once did, because of our intrusions into this life cycle with measures to prevent erosion and flooding, with measures to maintain the river's

course, and draining of the ponds on top, our cutting down of primary vegetation, not to mention the urban bridges, roads, parking lots, golf courses, etc., we have introduced to the valley.

But the "system" nature of the valley and its ravines still can and should be maintained as part of Edmonton's present urban environment. To plan the ravines as if they are a set of discrete green areas just happening to be along one side of another, as the parks master plan appears to do, is to ignore the most important characteristic distinctive feature of the valley. The City plan of 1915 showing the city portion of the river valley areas running South West to North East did obviously see the valley as "system". Unfortunately, because of speculators, bridges, and the need for the city to counter them with Mill Woods, we now see the primary axis of city growth running North-South, an undesirable state of affairs, which undoubtedly makes a mockery of the 1968 City general plan.

Planning the valley piece by piece can take into account its beauty and even its grandeur, but not that it flows through the whole city; that the whole fibre of Edmonton, as well as the area it may include as community, is determined more by this valley system than by any other feature, man-made or natural. Because of these facts, that the valley is basic to Edmonton's layout; that no part of Edmonton is more than three miles from that valley or one of the ravines around which the city is built; that the city indeed is built along the valley because the valley is hospitable, pleasant and easy to get to, to walk along, and to cross; we have the unique opportunity among Canadian cities to use a still-largely natural feature as a means of tying the City together in a delightful, human and healthy way. The valley system, if we use our imagination, can be the basis for making Edmonton a truly exciting urban place, in which many people have the opportunity to interact with one another for a variety of reasons. But potentially, the valley can only enhance Edmonton as an urban environment if its natural features are largely preserved. As a cheap conduit for expressways, the valley offers nothing but all the worst aspects of urban living; lots of noise, fumes, frenzy and a reduction of interaction among people.

The Valley must be so used by people that they can be together, directing their attention to each other to their refreshment and recreation and to the wonderful sounds and smells of nature. Expressways through the valley make it simply a place to get through or across. In terms of human activity, it becomes, at best, passively pretty, as something briefly to be seen at 40 miles per hour; and even then, you have to be the passenger of a person who is passing in the car. To the extent that we use the valley system as an expressway waste land, not to mention a sewer or garbage dump, we do not use it to tie the city together in human ways. The experience undoubtedly shows that expressways dissect the urban fibre, cutting it into pieces too small to be of use. Time and time again it has been found that trying to link together common parts of the city with expressways is like trying to knit a scarf with scissors. We have to use the right tools if the valley system is really going to be the means to tie Edmonton together as the urban experience it could be.

The city can only be tied together and be made efficient, pleasant and beautiful, by emphasizing pedestrian rather than motor traffic as the primary concern of

transportation, with other factors aiding the walker over long or difficult distances, or making the journey more interesting.

How can the river valley be developed and used so as to make walking more pleasant, indeed more practical as a means of getting through and into various sections of the city?

First, we must make it more possible for pedestrians to cross the river. In summer, we should have ferries; in winter, if possible, ice boats.

First, where will people want to walk using the river valley? In order of volume of traffic we suggest the following:

1. From the top down into the valley, for exercise and recreation.

2. Through the valley from one area to another, e.g. from "highrise-ville" West or to the Legislative Buildings or to downtown.

3. Across the river, e.g. from the high density areas on the north side to the University, or from the high density areas of the southside to the downtown area.

Getting to the Valley

The city's policy of protecting the approaches of the valley from private ownership, so as to facilitate access for everybody, is laudable. What the Practicum suggests, however, is that this needs to be taken one step further. Fingers of green must be brought up over the top and into the developed areas, so as to make it even more enticing for people to use the valley system. This becomes even more important if, as we suggest, the valley is used as a means of getting from one place to another, as we shall describe further on. Some places into which fingers of green might be extended are: into and through the University; to Sir Winston Churchill Square, upwards from the valley floor into the

continued on page 9

**Tequila
Sauza
makes
every
party
a
fiesta!**



Things that go bump in the night

If you heard strange noises in the middle of the night, chances are you would call the police, thinking you had burglars. If they came and discovered no signs of a break-in and no one on the premises, there is every chance that the police would leave and you may wonder if you have allowed your imagination to run riot. But if the same noises recurred again and again, would you dare to recall the police? Probably not, and that is the time to sit down and think about inviting either a priest or a parapsychologist into the house.

What you probably have is a delinquent spirit commonly called a ghost, and the presence of such unwelcome, nontangible visitors is increasingly engaging the attention of both priests and parapsychologists. Many people forget that within the tenets of most churches, there are specific rules for casting out devils. The reason why parapsychologists have gotten into the act is because the church has been reluctant to exercise its prerogative to exorcise or even recognize such spirits. It is as great a disservice to man as a doctor refusing to attend a sick person. In essence, the exorcising of a spirit is not only good for the living but also a major service to the dead because a ghost is really a psychotic spirit trapped in a time-warped and unable or unwilling to set itself free.

Since the study of the occult sciences had increased in the last ten years, the average person has a greater understanding of spirits and realizes that some help is needed. His troubles are added to because generally he does not know where to turn for help. Running down delinquent spirits is not part of the job for a police officer, and many priests prefer to think they can settle thymatter by talking sternly and strictly to the individual who has the unwelcome visitor. The only other person capable of exorcising a spirit is the parapsychologist, and it is mainly to these whom the householder must turn, knowing that he will be listened to without the parapsychologist sitting in judgment on him as many priests are inclined to do.

This is especially the case in the United States, but in Great Britain, it is not unusual for members of the Anglican clergy to use exorcism when requested. One of them, the Reverend Christopher Neil-Smith of St. Saviours Church in Hampstead, claims to have exorcised more than one thousand spirits in the last three years. Ministers no longer need the approval of their Bishop to exorcise evil spirits, for in 1970, the Church Canons in Britain were revised to meet with the increasing requests for religious exorcism.

Old Canon Number 72 in Britain laid down:

"No minister shall, without the license and direction of the Bishop of the Diocese first obtained and had under his hand and seal...attempt on any pretense whatsoever either of possession or obsession, by fasting and prayer, to cast out any devil or devils..."

Today, the Church Inquiry Center has a list of six clergymen who are allowed and prepared to carry out exorcism.

All this is fine for people in Britain, but in Canada, many people who are good church-goers may be troubled by spirits and be completely bewildered and upset at the idea of the local priest not being prepared to use the rites of exorcism. Many of them are suspicious of parapsychologists or ignorant as to where to hire one. Such people can become very upset when forced to live with a delinquent spirit in the house, and no hope of getting rid of it quietly and effectively is offered.

If your local priest will not help, then consult your nearest Psychic Research Association, which generally has a parapsychologist or two available and capable of performing exorcism rites. You may have to make a small donation to the Association. The word "exorcism" may have some bad connotations, but most people feel that a ghost in the house is inconvenient, to say the least!

It's great to have money in your pocket.

If you're looking for work, stop in or call...

MANPOWER
TEMPORARY SERVICES

We'll give you all the help you need.

Loading • Unloading • Material Handling
Warehousing • Truck Driving Help and Others
10310-102 ave 424-4165