

continues to fall short of its potential ... People of the twenty-first century are likely to deliver a negative verdict when they discover that one of the wealthiest societies of the late twentieth century aggressively pushed policies threatening forest ecosystems,

all in the face of varied and compelling doubts about the long term consequences. (348)

This is a compelling read for anyone who was there. For anyone who missed it but wants to enter the debate, it is the definitive history.

*The Wealth of Forests: Markets, Regulation, and Sustainable Forestry*

Chris Tollefson, editor

Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998. 396 pp. \$85 cloth, \$35.95 paper.

BY MIKE HARCOURT

*University of British Columbia*

**T**he *Wealth of Forests*, edited by Chris Tollefson, is a timely, well presented, but incomplete book. It is timely because over the next three to four years British Columbians will have to absorb the painful changes from the pioneering strip mining of our forests to the sustained yield practices of the last fifty years to the implementation of sustainable forestry. The book is timely for British Columbians who are about six years into a ten-year plan to mitigate Peter Pearse's 1975 Royal Commission prediction of a "fall down" period early in the twenty-first century. With the huge changes commenced by my government in 1991-96 – the Forest Practices Code, the CORE/LRMP land use plans, the Protected Area Strategy, Forest Renewal BC, the Nisga'a Treaty, and the Aboriginal Treaty process now being implemented – a review of the shift from sustainable yield to sustainable forestry is important.

*The Wealth of Forests* is well presented. As editor Chris Tollefson notes, "Although there is broad agreement on the need to achieve sustainable forestry, there is considerable disagreement over which policy instruments should be displayed to promote that goal" (4). "This book has grappled, from differing disciplinary and philosophical perspectives with the challenge of identifying sustainable policy alternatives that would correct the government failures" (375). Tollefson presents a range of views from Stanbury and Vertinsky's "free market environmentalism" to the ecosystem paradigm advocated by M'Gonigle, Dellert, and Gale.

My critique of *The Wealth of Forests* is that it is incomplete, which Tollefson readily admits (382). We are in a period of rapid change and great political fluidity, moving from sustained yield policies and practices to the uncertain practical realities of defining and im-

plementing sustainable forestry. It is unlikely that the ongoing debate in the political realm over the meaning and implications of sustainable forestry, triggered by these demands, will soon subside. Given this political fluidity, as well as the scientific and social uncertainties that characterize forest policy making, a key challenge is to design public institutions and policy instruments that can adapt to, indeed even flourish in, an environment of change. The nature of the governance and related reforms necessary to meet this challenge are only now being explored. This collection is a contribution to that process of exploration, offered in the hope that we can come closer to realizing the true wealth of our forests. My main concern is that the hundred-plus forest-industry-based communities, and the hundreds of thousands of BC citizens caught in this crunch, not be treated as grist for the mill – grist that is being ground around the concept of sustainable forestry.

Part of my critique of *The Wealth of Forests* is the certainty that Tollefson and the majority of its contributors have, both about the failure of contemporary Canadian forest policy and in their commitment to ecosystem-based forestry. The alternatives put forward range from Dobell's "full world" forests to Haley and Luchert's "sharecropping agreements" to M'Gonigle's eco-labelling and "true" community forest tenures and community forest boards. As we enter into the intense and charged next three-to-four year period, many questions remain that the contributors to *The Wealth of Forests* do not answer satisfactorily.

First and foremost, how do we ease the transitional economic pain of forest workers? Wishful thinking about tourism and value-added forest

products needs tougher examination. Leaders of the tourism industry, like Rick Antonson of Tourism Vancouver/Oceans Blue, know that tourism, too, has ecological limits. Are there really huge untapped markets for British Columbia's value-added forestry sector? The jury's still out on this issue, although new resources to advance the value-added forestry sector have been added at the University of Northern British Columbia, University of British Columbia (i.e., the Centre for Advanced Wood Product Manufacturing), Selkirk College Campus at Nelson, Forest Renewal BC, and Skills Now.

Second, the ecosystem-based forestry proponents sometimes have a theologically, rather than an economically or biologically, based opinion that clear-cutting old-growth is bad and that selective logging of secondary growth is good. Almost 50 million hectares of British Columbia's 65 million hectares of forest contain old-growth or original-growth forests. Not harvesting old-growth/original-growth forests would eliminate 75 to 80 per cent of British Columbia's forests, leaving only the 15 million hectares of secondary-growth forests (which have been reforested with over four billion native BC seedlings). No clear-cutting of any sort (even with the significantly smaller cut blocks required with the Forest Practices Code) is problematic when shade-unfriendly species like Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, and larch are involved or when canopy-entangled coastal rain forests are to be harvested.

The proposition that clear-cutting old-growth is bad and selective logging is good is not only a debatable issue (which, along with needed tenure reform, Forestry Minister David Zirnhelt has stated is open for a public dialogue in the spring/fall of 1999), but it also needs to be more transparent in the

present eco-labelling systems being thrust forward in British Columbia. As the battle lines form around whether to apply the Canadian Standards Associations (CSA) certification scheme, the Forest Stewardship Council scheme, or some revised amalgam of both, understanding the biases underlying both schemes should be a major requirement.

Proponents of ecosystem-based forestry (not the authors in *Wealth of Forests*) all too often claim solidarity with British Columbia's Aboriginal peoples and their quest for just and equitable treaties. However, the bottom line of these ecosystem-based forestry advocates entails a no clear-cutting, no old-growth cutting position (i.e., Greenpeace regarding coastal rain forests, Friends of the Valhalla Society regarding boreal forests) that would

leave most Aboriginal communities with only the desert lands around Osoyoos. So Aboriginal leaders are justifiably sceptical of such solidarity, as we witnessed with Greenpeace's summer 1997 campaign during the mid-coast Great Spirit Bear campaign to have the whole area protected as a park.

Having raised these many questions and critiques, I welcome Chris Tollefson's *The Wealth of Forests* as timely, well presented, but incomplete. The intensifying dialogue concerning British Columbia's transition from sustainable yield to sustainable forestry requires books such as *The Wealth of Forests* as well as the University of Victoria's 1995 conference, from which it sprang. We need more debate and dialogue about the future of British Columbia's forests.

## *Red Bait! Struggles of a Mine Mill Local*

Al King with Kate Braid

Vancouver: Kingbird Publishing, 1998.  
176 pp. Illus. (8096 Elliott, Vancouver v5s 2P2)

BY DAVID ROTH

*dmr Research Services, Burnaby*

In his introduction to *Red Bait!* Al King notes that his book is not a history; rather, it is a record of his experiences in the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (Mine-Mill) from the late 1930s to its merger with the United Steelworkers of America (Steel) in 1967. King's characterization of his book is bang on. A solid historical analysis of Mine-Mill, the Steel raids, and the subsequent merger has yet to be written. Nor is it

a Communist Party history, although King has been a member of the party since 1938. Instead, *Red Bait!* is a series of telling anecdotes, ably organized and presented with the assistance of Kate Braid. The sum total is a memoir that serves as an entree into the world of industrial unionism from the 1930s to the 1970s. With colourful language and nearly unbridled passion, King shows the reader just how rough and ready that world could be.