

Book Reviews

Essays in B.C. Political Economy, edited by Paul Knox and Philip Resnick. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1974, 81 pp., \$2.00.

Collections which draw together papers presented under amorphous conference panel headings rarely hang together with any degree of cohesion or manage to sustain treatment of a subject area. Knox and Resnick's collection of material presented to the first Conference on Socialist Studies held at UBC in early 1973 provides no exception to the rule. This is not surprising given that the editors find a place in just eighty pages for everything from substantive essays on political economy to poetry. Taken collectively, these contributions, which are proffered unpretentiously as "exploratory forays into socialist analysis of British Columbia," provide a disjointed introduction to both approach and subject area. Individually, they vary greatly in what they have to offer.

Resnick's essay, "The Political Economy of B.C.: A Marxist Perspective," deserves to be read along with other introductory essays on B.C. politics. The insights he derives from his version of a Marxist framework are hardly so compelling as to convince the unconverted that this is the perspective to make all B.C. history fall into place. But the skeleton of an approach which should impel and guide further work is set out along with some worthwhile ideas on the historical behaviour of the B.C. business class. The main thesis, derived from the metropolitan-hinterland perspective, is that B.C., to an extent which makes it unique among Canadian resource hinterlands, is oriented to a plurality of metropolises. A second perspective, emphasizing "the class relations that evolve in the production of certain staples," is left largely undeveloped even though our appetite is whetted with the assertion that the resource basis of the B.C. economy fosters "antagonistic class relations of an almost classic Marxist variety."

It should be emphasized that Resnick deals solely with the province as a resource hinterland of extra-provincial metropolises, and not with metro-

polititan-hinterland tensions within the province. So there is no speculation here on the role of metropolitan-hinterland divisions in reinforcing or undermining a politics of class division in the province. Neither is consideration given to the question of whether Vancouver has been purely an intermediate sub-metropolis as opposed to a centre for an important independent bourgeoisie.

Attempts like Resnick's to sketch encompassing generalizations about B.C. will remain tentative, spotty and limited in scope until a more healthy body of empirical analysis is built up to provide nourishment. The merits of an inductive-deductive division of scholarly labour are demonstrable but, in terms of priorities, it seems clear after reading an essay like Resnick's that we need intensive case studies of the relationships between business, society and politics more than we need analytic frameworks or broadly stroked interpretations.

The two papers based on undergraduate research projects at UBC both involve an overeagerness to arrive at pre-set conclusions. But there is enough substance in these endeavours to suggest that important gaps in knowledge about B.C. politics and society could be filled if efforts were made to edit and collect good undergraduate essays on B.C. topics researched at universities and community colleges.

In the first and best of these essays Reid and Weaver explore the evolution of the forestry tenure system up to the 1950's. The historical sketch they contribute is useful. They also make a good try at building a circumstantial case for the argument that the large, integrated forestry operations played a crucial role in both the initiation of the first Sloan Commission and the determination of its recommendations, the most notable of which laid out the system of perpetual yield embodied in the Forest Management Licence scheme. There can be little doubt (evidence of certain atavistic responses like those noted in the "Celanese Adventure" aside) that the integrated firms saw the Sloan proposals as compatible with their interests as they launched their large-scale pulp and paper operations. Such is not to demonstrate, however, that the FML innovation was not much more widely perceived as an optimal solution to the problem of meshing sustained yield with a system where public ownership of the land was retained. On the other hand, as Reid and Weaver suggest, the idea of perpetual yield had long been paid lip-service, and it was not until the forestry giants came to perceive this system as advantageous that it was put into practice.

Addie, Czepil and Rumsey close their piece on "The Power Elite in B.C." with apparent satisfaction at having both demonstrated the exis-

tence of a small, cohesive, controlling economic élite and revealed the means by which this élite influences actions in the political sphere. Were these goals attained, there would indeed be grounds for self-satisfaction, and all the more so since the whole exercise can be reported in just six pages. Most readers will wish for a more thorough presentation of evidence before making up their minds.

About the attempt to show how an economic élite extends its influence to the political sphere little need be said. Addie *et al.* fail to enlighten us in this area where the truth, for all its apparent palpability, remains most elusive and difficult to demonstrate. As for showing the existence of a cohesive élite, it is a pity that more time was not spent reporting the results of what was apparently a major investigation designed to explore the area. We are left with conclusions based on information contained in three short paragraphs.

In the first, reference is made to a corporate "conglomerate" involving four of the top five logging firms and four of the top seven mining companies operating in B.C. More details are needed before most readers will be satisfied that their own conception of a "conglomerate" obtains here. In the second, results of a study of interlocking directorships involved in the top twenty-six B.C. companies are reported. These results, which among other things show that 319 directorships were distributed among 275 individuals, leave in doubt the implied conclusion that there is something remarkable about the extent of interlocking directorship involved in B.C. capitalist enterprise. A third bit of research, dealing with the incidence of "interaction" among directors outside of their own companies, is reported in one sentence. There are 339 incidences of interaction among 110 interacting directors. Before the reader can ponder this he is whisked off to the case of J. V. Clyne. He interacts with eleven "important" people through his directorships.

The remainder of the volume proceeds at a markedly different pace. A section on labour and, more particularly, on the place of independent Canadian unions leads off with Jack Scott's arguments against "pure and simple" unionism and prescriptions for a more ideological brand. Those who share Scott's analyses and hopes concerning the role of independent Canadian unions as vehicles for transcending Gomerism will find cause for both optimism and pessimism in the transcripts of interviews conducted by the co-editors with individuals representing both sides in the 1972-73 breakaway movements at Kitimat and Trail.

The volume's final short section on B.C. radical culture is most worthwhile. Victor Hopwood's survey of the literature of B.C. radicalism should

both inspire students of this subject and provide them with further directions for exploration. Dorothy Livesay's rambling narrative recounts some of her experiences as a writer during the Depression. Incidentally, readers would find it worthwhile to track down the essays, written by Livesay in the 1930's and referred to in her account, in which she dealt with Depression conditions in a series of small B.C. mining towns.

In the final pages of the collection, we find some efforts from poets who, the editors suggest, draw "in their own ways" on the "radical literary traditions of the province." To my eye, most of this poetry seems more representative of Vancouver's recent "counter-culture" than of B.C. radical traditions. Certainly none of this poetry has an impact comparable to that included in Livesay's talk.

Clearly the scholarship of B.C. political economy is not yet providing theory and research at a rate which would allow a volume like this to be anything but a disappointment to those hoping to discover much in the way of fertile new interpretation or important empirical analysis. It seems unlikely that the editors expected this thin volume to stand as a great achievement in B.C. political economy, and indeed it does not. But it is far from barren of ideas, and when confronted with the question of whether attempts such as this to put ideas into circulation should be encouraged, we must surely reply in the affirmative.

University of Victoria

JEREMY WILSON

Shipwrecks of British Columbia, by Fred Rogers. J. J. Douglas Ltd.
256 pp. illus., map., index. \$10.95.

Shipwrecks of British Columbia is a labour of love on the part of its author, who has been a scuba diver since 1954, and who has personally dived on many of the wrecks that he describes. His hobby as a diver led him to an incredible degree of effort to research material in every available primary source. His trail led him through more than a century of newspaper files, yellowed government reports and personal reminiscences.

Mr. Rogers has no formal writing skill, but he persisted in his determination to record the definitive history of British Columbia shipwrecks. The great mass of material that he had collected was at last brought within manageable limits, with the assistance of Mr. Les Way, and was brought to publication by J. J. Douglas Ltd.

Details are given of several hundred wrecks, starting with the loss of the *Tonquin* off the west coast of Vancouver in 1811, which is still an unsolved mystery. However, Mr. Rogers does not follow chronological order in describing his wrecks. He has chosen to follow his trail of wrecks geographically: the Strait of Georgia, Strait of Juan de Fuca, west coast of Vancouver Island and northern coast. An excellent index provides ready access to individual ships, while the three shipwreck charts produced by Mr. Rogers, which cover the entire British Columbia coast area, are a model of painstaking research. He pinpoints the locations of no less than 1,101 wrecks, along with the tonnage of the vessel, its name, date and cause of loss.

Not all those wrecks recorded on the charts are described in the main text, but certainly every wreck really worth the name is included. Since Mr. Rogers has himself dived on some of the most noteworthy wrecks, his personal descriptions of what he saw and found add much to the narrative.

For instance, one of the most notable wrecks on the B.C. coast was that of the former trans-Atlantic liner *Ohio* in 1909 in Carter Bay, near Princess Royal Channel. Mr. Rogers devotes two pages to this historic vessel, followed by three pages on his search for the wreck in 1964.

"We were about 60 feet, our hands numb from the cold water, but we ventured on," he writes. "On reaching the stern, we peered over the railing and allowed ourselves to sink to the sandy bottom at a depth of 90 feet. The shadowy bulk of the large rudder and the graceful lines of the hull were an awesome sight. It was disappointing to discover that the propeller was missing, but we found the end of the shaft under mud. We followed along the hull expecting to find the hole that flooded the *Ohio*, but this was obviously buried from sight. She seemed to be completely intact. . . .

"The gloomy weather continued to hang low and thick around the mountains, with chilling showers. We cursed the weather, but the lure of the *Ohio* spurred us on. Gradually, we worked our way through the forbidding darkness below decks. The dining saloon was a black hole that called for our lights; even then it was a hazardous place to be in, for the slightest touch would dislodge parts of the wreck and stir the water into inky blackness. When I tried to open the door, it fell on me but didn't do any harm. Many interesting dishes, glass decanters and bed-pots were gathered."

From this excerpt, taken at random, it can be seen that Mr. Rogers'

book is not a dull, repetitive listing of names. It is a collection of personal adventures, as well as a major source book for those interested in the marine history of the west coast.

NORMAN HACKING

The Vancouver Soundscape. Report No. 5 of the World Soundscape Project. With two records ("Signals and Soundmarks," and "On Acoustic Design"). Simon Fraser University, Burnaby 2, B.C. 71 pp. 36 illustrations and diagrams.

Today "ecology" is on everybody's lips — young and old, experts and amateurs, governments and citizens — though whether they all understand the full implications of environment is debatable. One dimension of today's living *milieu* has certainly not received the attention it demands. That dimension is noise — pervasive and escalated in every large city, spreading rapidly to the countryside, to the oceans, to the air. People (especially those who live near airports, who work in factories or who note the growing din of trucks, motorcycles and high-powered, badly-driven automobiles) are becoming aware that noise above 85 decibels is dangerous. How many are aware of an equally disastrous psychological effect — that, whether defensively or through sheer insensitivity, more and more people *are not listening*?

The Sonic Research Studio is a special unit of the Communications Studies Department at Simon Fraser University. A dedicated and ingenious team there, led by R. Murray Schafer (an active musician as well as a pioneer in this novel area of multiple-discipline acoustics research), have already to their credit four major reports, including a manual on noise pollution (offered to adult citizens as well as the schools), a sounds compendium derived primarily from the ocean, a "music of the environment" symposium and a survey of community noise by-laws in Canada, so far as we have them. This latter alone should be prime reading for those of us — surely a growing number — who want to know "why something isn't being done about it." (Answer: most of them are ludicrously out of date and have no effective enforcement provisions.)

This present report (No. 5, reviewed here) is particularly likely to secure the interest the subject deserves, for it focuses entirely on Vancouver. The collaborators have garnered a fascinating variety of materials — quotations from writers, reminiscences, monitorings of landmarks

(now rechristened as "soundmarks") like the nine o'clock gun, the Holy Rosary bells, the B.C. Tel. noon siren and the lighthouse foghorn, and technical explorations of beautiful and ugly sound-images. Since all this is "illustrated" (vocalized?) by four sets of recordings (on two long-play discs), the presentation lends itself readily to schools, community association meetings, college and adult-education seminars and radio programs. Whether the recordings are used as auxiliary to the booklet or the booklet is studied to enlarge on the impact of the gamut of sounds which the records bring to life is immaterial, so long as both are utilized. The explanations are ample, whether desired in technical jargon or plain comment on the "yin and yang" — the sounds which are peaceful, soothing, nostalgic, musical — versus those which are raucous, shattering, thoughtless, mechanical by-products, or even misguided inventions. The summary talk by Murray Schafer on side 2 of record 2 elucidates admirably the concept of acoustic design, and the differences between urban environmental planning which is vividly aware of noise-pollution and noise-control and the ear-shattering free-for-all which streets and buildings (including many new ones) of the modern city are combining to create.

There are many eminently quotable items in this Vancouver compendium. Their topical quality for those of us who live here will not prevent their use for other metropolitan centres. Indeed, if envy and arrogance allegedly generated by this city so well-endowed by nature is as great as some of the journalists from other cities would have us believe, they will be delighted to be able to point out that in this new-dimensional menace of 1970's urbanism "beautiful British Columbia" is no better served than its giant rivals (New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, Montreal, etc.) — to say nothing of the relative peace which still reigns in the small towns and the remoter areas. (But there are still highways, air-routes, oil installations, shopping centres. Dare one add television and commercial advertising?).

The booklet opens with quotations from philosophers, poets, pioneers and explorers. The comments of Emily Carr alone are worth the price of the book: her sensitivity to sound and her vivid verbal descriptions were the equal of her skill and strength as a painter. How she loved trees (listen to the sound of one being felled by the loggers when you read of what she called the "screamers")! And how she loathed the radio turned on without anybody really listening! Describing the changes in Vancouver over the last hundred years by its *sounds* (the ships' whistles and other sounds of the busy waterfront, the trains, the *birds*) is a stimulating

variation to be commended for young children's history classes. The study does not neglect to make clear that there are many peaceful, nostalgic sounds — sounds which reassure one, of nature on the one hand and of community on the other. When they are obliterated, can we restore them; or can we replace them with *designed* acoustic features which are civilized, artistic, appealing? Or, at least, can we ensure that parks, public buildings, civic centres are havens *protected* from noise? The report tackles these issues in its Part VI, with suggestions for new aspects of active citizenship, where there is obviously much more to be done. The parallels with what one may perhaps be allowed to call conventional ecology — air, sea and water monitoring, restrictive legislation, educational campaigns, action organizations — are readily apparent. Perhaps the revelation that “resources” are not just for the industrialist or the tourist but for the *residents* that has now come clearly through the ecology movements can now be translated also to our ears. The SFU team have fashioned a semantic lever for the task in their creative adaptations of terminology. “Soundscape” and “soundmarks,” from landscape and landmarks, are readily assimilatable examples. However, terms like “schizophonia,” “masking,” “isobel” and “Moozak” should set the curious reader (including the curious school child) exploring the pages of this study. And it will be profitable exploration.

Those who want some touches or irony, indignation or humour will also find them in this book-plus-recording quarry. Members of the team who sought the reactions of pedestrians to noise found that the “men on the street” immediately assumed they were on a television program! The data from airplane and motorcycle surveys were misleading as a test of whether the effects were unpleasant or not because the respondents observed only a small proportion of the vehicles; the victims had become non-listeners! Projections from that oasis of unique forest, Stanley Park, show that if present aircraft noise continues unabated at its present rate of acceleration, the noise will be *total and uninterrupted* by 1981. The satirical comments, as well as the surveys, on piped-in (or piped-out) “music,” will delight those suffering souls who agree with Hindemith that Moosak is a form of “musical sewage.” As for the most recent product of Alice-in-Wonderland technology — “white noise” — only a Lewis Carroll could do it justice. (This is the reviewer's comment, not Hindemith's.) The purpose of “white noise,” apparently, is to cover up other noises of the commercial and industrial environment, thereby reducing the recipients to a continuous, numbed insensitivity.

In sum, there is a “new look” at the cities — and the whole continent

affected by “progress,” “development,” modern transportation and “economic growth” — which needs to be generated for contemporary responsible citizenship. If *Vancouver Soundscape* can help to spread the word on this (and open our ears), it will be a worthy achievement. And the perceptive contribution which this flexible research team of the World Soundscape Project are making will bring credit to this Simon Fraser effort, which it richly merits.

University of British Columbia

LEONARD MARSH

Land, Man, and the Law: The Disposal of Crown Lands in British Columbia, 1871-1913, by Robert E. Cail. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1974. 334 pp., illus.

Robert Cail wrote in a grand tradition. For over half a century the interaction of man and the land had been one of the central problems of American historiography. In Canada the scholars of the Thirties had seized upon the theme and produced the great, over-arching volumes of the *Frontiers of Settlement* series. The basic impulse had been Turnerian, the belief that the secret to cultural and political development was locked in man's struggle to tame his material environment. After the interval of the second world war scholars set themselves the task of complementing the essentially “federal” work of Innis, Lower, Mackintosh and Martin with studies of land policy in the colonial period and in those provinces which controlled their own natural resources. It was at this time that Lillian Gates produced her thesis on Crown Lands Policy in Upper Canada and that Robert Cail presented this magisterial study for a Master's degree at the University of British Columbia.

This extraordinary first book-length essay sadly became Robert Cail's only contribution to Canadian scholarship. He died tragically shortly after completing *Land, Man, and the Law*. Now, almost twenty years later, the University of British Columbia Press has brought out his manuscript as a book. That it should have lain so long ignored is in itself an indictment of both scholarly publishing and scholarship in this country. For example, the most recent history of British Columbia appears to have been written without its benefit. In any event, the University of British Columbia Press is to be congratulated for taking the initiative and producing this handsomely printed, bound and illustrated testimonial to the enduring quality of Robert Cail's scholarship.

As Margaret Ormsby makes abundantly clear in the first sentence of her generous forward — a sentence ringing with proud independence: “Of the four western provinces, only British Columbia entered Confederation having control of its public lands.” But however much British Columbia thought itself alone behind its shield of mountains, it nevertheless encountered much the same problems of Crown lands management and adopted strikingly similar policies to deal with them as the other parts of the country. The timber licensing system established in 1905, which Cail describes as “unique on the continent,” was in fact standard procedure in eastern Canada and had been for a long time. Gradually, British Columbia got drawn into the Canadian way of doing things. As elsewhere, legislation represented a constant retreat in the face of greed and necessity during what Martin Robin has aptly termed the Rush for Spoils.

After three narrative chapters on colonial and provincial land settlement policies up to 1913, Cail adopts a topical approach to his subject to bring order out of the welter of rapidly changing and often contradictory laws. He treats the various departments of lands administration in turn, surveys, forestry, mining, water, and then the most persistent issues, the railway belt, railroad land grants, and finally the Indian lands question. Cail is a proponent of what might be called the primal wisdom school of British Columbia historiography. Governor Douglas said it all; his proclamations aimed at promoting orderly settlement, curbing speculation, collecting a regular and substantial Crown revenue, extinguishing Indian title and setting aside generous reserves Cail believes “covered every major contingency that has yet arisen in the land policy of the province.” But he goes further: “. . . had Douglas continued the role of leadership in British Columbia until after the union with Canada, few of the land problems which did plague the province for so many years would have arisen.” But in the dark days after Confederation, in the days of the pygmy kings, British Columbians lost Douglas’ comprehensive vision. In the pursuit of immediate goals, in the rush to settle the land, to promote railways and resource development, in their eagerness to settle scores for real or imagined grievances with the federal government, they parted with their rich patrimony for a relatively small return and woefully neglected, even denied, their social responsibility towards the Indians.

However, in documenting this indictment Cail offers some evidence to the contrary by showing (1) that some of the later problems did in fact crop up during Douglas’ time without appreciably different results, in

particular the size of Indian reserves controversy, and (2) that poor administrative institutions rather than bad intentions enfeebled later legislators. "However praiseworthy the legislation," he admits at the end, "it was only as effective as the supervision required to ensure compliance with the law." Lillian Gates put it more colourfully in describing the Upper Canadian experience: "Without efficient law enforcement, it is something like opening the strings of a gigantic grab-bag." Even Solon would have failed to cope with the tremendous individual and corporate land lust of the nineteenth century.

Surely one of the greatest ironies of the age was that while governments did their utmost to prevent land speculation by individuals, they themselves practised land speculation on a grand scale to build railroads. Indeed, as Cail points out, more land was handed over to railroads during this 43-year period than was disposed for mining, agriculture, forestry and Indian reserves combined! By 1913 the railroads had laid claim to most of the arable land in the province, all of which leads the author to the tepid conclusion: "It is still debatable whether the people of British Columbia received a fair return for their lands. Transportation was vital to the development of the province within the framework of Confederation, but the price was high."

After 1900 British Columbians recovered some of the ground lost in the late nineteenth century. This was quite literally the case as the Crown recaptured some of these dormant railroad land grants. But in a broader sense, Cail argues, the first decade of the twentieth century was a period during which something like Douglas' authority was reasserted. Thus Cail arrives at the surprisingly upbeat conclusion that by 1913 the province could "boast of the best mining laws on the continent, timber legislation as enlightened as any to be found in the world, and the most advanced water legislation." Without necessarily accepting Cail's value judgments, but granting his premise — that a measure of order and regularity was imposed — it is interesting to note that from an entirely different perspective his work lends support to Martin Robin's argument concerning the importance of a predictable legal environment in the development process. Robin would most certainly take issue with his adjectives, but not his findings. Thus far considerable attention has been devoted to the politicians as agents of stability, but relatively little to the rise of the provincial bureaucracy. In large measure this new stability depended upon the gradual bureaucratization of the state. Who were the new civil servants who framed and enforced these laws? What were the political and social dynamics of this process of institution building? Here

is a fruitful area of inquiry in British Columbia and the other provinces too, for that matter.

Without doubt Robert Cail's untangling of the complicated history of land settlement policies, natural resource law and the interminable railway belt dispute will stand as the definitive account of these subjects.

Even though his research was confined to the published sources, principally the B.C. *Sessional Papers*, it would seem unlikely that an examination of the unpublished correspondence and departmental memoranda — if indeed they have survived — would yield much in the way of surprises. Rather than rewriting what Cail had done so admirably, this generation should set to work on a companion volume bringing the analysis up to our time. Of all his subjects only the Indian lands chapters are likely to undergo revision. At the moment a score of individual scholars and three different teams of researchers working in an adversary relationship are turning the study of native people's rights into an academic growth industry. One would expect Cail's apparent confidence in federal paternalism to be seriously shaken by the results of all this furious archival digging. His harsh judgment of William Duncan — he quotes at approving length John A. Macdonald's opinion that Duncan "had lost his head altogether" — has already been challenged. Nevertheless, for its thoroughness, its moderation, for its clear explication of the law of the land, and for its appendices which pull together all of the relevant statistics pertaining to land alienation, *Land, Man, and the Law* will most certainly become a standard reference work in British Columbia history. It has already stood the test of time.

Since the Fifties this kind of study, valuable though it continues to be, has gone out of fashion perhaps because in the course of detailed research the original Turnerian questions got lost among the mountains of file cards. With the total eclipse of environmental determinism scholars tended to ignore Man and the Land in their pursuit of the Law on the assumption that the Law determined what kind of society the resources of Canada would be used to create — to paraphrase Lillian Gates. But who made the law, in what circumstances and to what ultimate ends? For the underlying meaning of the law one has to look beyond this generation of descriptive studies.