Although Campbell modestly sees his study as "a matter of record" and argues that "the historical significance of the beachcombers for the history of Polynesia is less in their achievement than in their being" (p. 154), we find that overall the impact of these men on the course of Pacific history was by no means insignificant. Some became embroiled in political intrigues, even fighting in wars, many acted as intermediaries between Islanders and foreigners, and some even acquired land and lived out their lives in the islands. As Campbell observes, the beachcombers often assimilated "not to the point of invisibility but only to the point of conformity and cooperation," enabling them to influence the process of social and cultural change by "sponsoring new ideas, new knowledge, and new artifacts" (p. 124). As a welcome counterpoint to those grander narratives of Pacific history, this book is a valuable record of the experiences of these often forgotten "marginal men."

La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia HELEN MORTON


In a time of rising environmental conflicts, where do political histories stop and chronicles of land use planning (debacles) begin? On this fund cusp, Jeremy Wilson, a professor of political science at the University of Victoria, recounts decisions by the Government of British Columbia from 1965 to 1996 to liquidate much ancient forest and to preserve only a modest amount of wilderness and other natural areas. Talk and Log comprises one of the most detailed pieces of scholarship on the Pacific Rim that combines environmental and administrative histories with political analysis. At the end of Wilson's chronicle, 150,000 hectares of forest in the province, the great majority being previously unlogged, are still being clearcut in large swaths. Hence the title: there has been much ado about only modest conservation achievements. Wilson confirms that much of the conservation talk and public input has functioned more as an industry-and government-managed diversion to divert attention from the high rates of forest loss.

Roughly 94 percent of the province's 93 million hectare land base is publicly owned. Roughly half of these public lands are considered productive forest. Only 10.5 million hectares are or were, historically, the more spectacular temperate rainforest often dominated by the species Western Hemlock, and with an area roughly a third of that of drier Coastal Douglas fir forest. Today probably more than half of these coastal forests, from which much of the wealth of British Columbia has been made, have been logged at least once. Much of the conflicts that Wilson documents have been about the remaining coastal and lowland interior forests. Wilson describes land use planning in the province as dominated by "a powerful industry engaged in an increasingly complicated struggle to contain a rising environmental movement" (p. xxvi). Wilson examines the state of health of local democracy and repeatedly finds poorly implemented reformist legislation and back room deals with a small number of international corporations that emasculate any challenges to control.

One of the most important functions of Talk and Log is to answer some historical and more contemporary riddles carefully. Why, for example, with so many innovative initiatives going back to the province's Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat of the 1970s, has resource management continued to be dominated by the requirements of unhampered liquidation of ancient forest? Why have the many efforts for local control of public forest lands, stretching back to at least the Slocan Valley in 1974, been so effectively stymied? Why, after nearly thirty years of proposals and abortive programmes, are guidelines for sustainable forestry and conservation now nonexistent or weak? Talk and Log takes the reader down decades of grey bureaucratic corridors to illustrate time and time again how forest industry pressures and provincial agency complacency have been effective at allowing the liquidation of often thousands of additional hectares at a time.

Talk and Log runs a bit short on Wilson's promised exploration of "how the wilderness movement destabilized the old policy community by mobilizing previously indifferent citizens" (p. 10). There is simply insufficient coverage of the broader body politic of British Columbia. Instead, Talk and Log functions best as a chronicle, a prelude to the kind of reflection on the impacts of environmental conflicts on the historicized body politic of British Columbia that, while badly needed, may be premature. The author's passion in Talk and Log is clearly in charting the gaps between democracy and decision making around public lands. A more focused and aggressive examination could have been half the size of this weighty tome. But the detailing of initiatives that lead to little net conservation is a tremendous achievement in itself. With its cross-disciplinary research on politics, administration and land use planning, Talk and Log paves the way for a host of new scholarship on related political economies around the Pacific Rim.

Vancouver, Canada GORDON BRENT INGRAM

Correction

Correct publisher is Cornell East Asia Series.