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Managing Canada's Renewable Resources, Edited by Ralph R. Krueger and Bruce Mitchell

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BOOK REVIEWS

MANAGING CANADA'S RENEWABLE RESOURCES

edited by

RALPH R. KRUEGER and BRUCE MITCHELL

Toronto, Methuen Publications, 1977, pp. 333, \$9.95.

This book of readings grew out of a need to present materials to Canadian university students studying any of a number of courses related to environmental and resource management. It will be most useful for undergraduate courses of a general nature, and for secondary schools, community colleges and adult education. More advanced students will find it too limited.

The book is divided into four sections: Perspectives, Assessment and Decision Making, Land, and Water. Each begins with a summary by the editors, who also provide a brief historical overview of the growing concern for renewable resources in Canada. The four sections contain 22 articles in total, about one-third of which were written by the editors themselves or by their colleagues at the University of Waterloo, which has a vigorous environmental program. Most of the articles have appeared elsewhere, but a few were commissioned especially for this book to cover topics, such as the efforts to protect the Niagara escarpment in Ontario, that the editors felt would be of particular relevance to their students.

The first section of the book is much too brief to do justice to the various subjects, with one article each on economic, social, and ecological perspectives on resource management plus a two-page excerpt from Aldo Leopold's *A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC*. Moreover, only the first of these is written by a Canadian (Peter Pearse of UBC). It seems inappropriate to tell Canadian students that this book is designed for them and then to ignore Canadian writing on, of all subjects, social and ecological perspectives.

The section on decision making is more useful, with articles on environmental impact statements, approaches to evaluation, the governmental process, and the role of the public. Most of these articles do emphasize the Canadian context, and they provide a good general introduction to the specifics in the case studies which follow. Had the editors expanded their own overview to cover perspectives, and used the space gained for additional materials on decision making, the book would have been better balanced. For example, none of these selections refer to organized labor, nor to the jobs vs. environ-

ment controversy, which often play critical roles in decisions.¹ More space would also have permitted a challenge to the contention (by Hendee, Clark and Stanley) that public participation, while desirable, is a means to an end rather than an end in itself.² One of the lessons we should have learned, most recently from the many Hearings conducted by Mr. Justice Berger on northern pipelines,³ is that stimulation of public participation is in many ways an end in itself.

The latter two sections of case studies are the most successful parts of the book, for they bring out the issues and the tactics surrounding environmental decisions in Canada—exactly what a book of readings should do. The editors wisely chose to focus on just two renewable resources, land and water, which permits comparisons to be made among the possible uses. Topics covered in the section on land include agriculture, the Niagara fruit belt, the Niagara escarpment, national parks, and the North. Those in the section on water include national water policy, the Skagit valley, flooding around Lake Erie, riparian land use, the Parkhill Dam, use of an urban creek, and the North. All of the situations are Canadian, though, unfortunately, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces are not represented. The best chapters are those that focus on a specific problem in a specific region. More general chapters suffer from the fault of trying to cover too much, as do the earlier sections of the book, and this leads to superficiality. (What, for example, is one to make of the following comment about radioactive wastes: “The morality of bequeathing our descendants such a deadly legacy seems doubtful to me, but I cannot recall reading a single statement on this question by a humanist or a social scientist.”⁴ Even in 1973, when that was originally written, there were many such statements.)

One perspective is notable for its absence among the case studies: economics. Despite Pearse's article, all of the studies operate from institutional, historical, or ecological perspectives. (J. C. Day's article on the Parkhill Dam is a partial exception.) None puts forward an economic analysis of possible options, and most associate economics with narrow commercial choices. This is unfortunate, for, as Krutilla and others have shown,⁵ economics is often a powerful weapon in favor of good management and even preservation.

1. Paelhke, *Labour and Environment: Alternatives Conference Report*, 4 ALTERNATIVES 2 (1975); Woodcock, *Labor and the Politics of Environment*, 56 SIERRA CLUB BULL. 11 (1971).

2. R. KRUEGER & B. MITCHELL, *MANAGING CANADA'S RENEWABLE RESOURCES* 92 (1977).

3. T. BERGER, *NORTHERN FRONTIER, NORTHERN HOMELAND* (1977).

4. R. KRUEGER & B. MITCHELL, *supra* note 2, at 202.

5. Krutilla, *Conservation Reconsidered*, 57 AM. ECON. REV. (1967).

Still, the book will be useful in the classroom. It would be a good companion text to Environment Canada's CONSERVATION IN CANADA: A CONSPECTUS,⁶ which treats the regions and resources of Canada in a more systematic but less political way. Students working with the Krueger-Mitchell book will have to come to grips with the varying points of view expressed, and also with the fact that good analysis is often ignored by decision makers. If, as Derrick Sewell suggests, analysts have not, in many cases, been asking the questions of interest to politicians,⁷ students should be led to ponder just what are the right questions. At the very least, they can develop guidelines for future studies, including such important ideas as insisting upon post-project audits, continued involvement with the several concerned publics, and careful definition of the assumptions to be used for assessing environmental impact.

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6. J. Maini & A. Carlisle, *Conservation in Canada: A Conspectus*, Can. Forestry Service Publication No. 1340 (1974).

7. R. KRUEGER & B. MITCHELL, *supra* note 2, at 67-68.

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