WINNING BACK THE WORDS: CONFRONTING EXPERTS IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEARING. By MARY RICHARDSON, JOAN SHERMAN and MICHAEL GISMONDI. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993. 191 p., indexed. Softbound. Cdn$16.95.

There is always a tendency after the environmental hearings are over and the regulatory panel's report is submitted to forgive and forget. What was once a pitched battle amongst environmentalists, local residents, an industrial proponent and various levels of government becomes a moldering batch of verbatim transcripts, a fading photograph file and increasingly muddled memories. Rivers are dammed, trees are cut, pipelines are buried and life goes on. This is all a great shame because Canada has an international reputation for its public inquiries and royal commissions into energy, forestry and tourism developments. Many scholars of such processes see Canada (and particularly northern Canada) as the exemplar of natural justice, due process and courage in decision making. We even occasionally say no to or delay a project, where most countries would press on in the greater cause of pulp, oil and electrical power. Given the human propensity to forget, it is time to develop a literature of protest, of small holders, of dissidents and stewards who presented the other side of the developmental story. *Winning Back the Words* is a notable contribution to this genre, and joins such prior works as *Bob Blair's Pipeline* (Bregha, 1979), *The Last of the Free Enterprisers: The Oilmen of Calgary* (House, 1980), *Rationality and Ritual: The Windscale Inquiry and Nuclear Decisions in Britain* (Wynne, 1982), and *Prophets, Pastors and Public Choices: Canadian Churches and the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Debate* (Hutchinson, 1992) on my bookshelf.

The Alberta Pacific (or AlPac) bleached kraft pulp mill project in northern Alberta provides the authors of *Winning Back the Words* with marvellous case study material, and the book focuses on the environmental impact assessment hearings which took place in Alberta and the Northwest Territories during 1989-1991. A central theme of *Winning Back the Words* is the efficacy of traditional wisdom and local knowledge in testing the claims of western scientific knowledge. Richardson, Sherman and Gismondi give this theme full play, and use well chosen direct quotes from the hearings' transcripts to illustrate their points (p. 93):

> Bioaccumulation of such chlorinated organic compounds (i.e., those found in biologically treated kraft mill effluent), if it occurs, is usually in the livers of fish, not the muscle tissue. Thus the likelihood that these compounds will be ingested by people through fish consumption is slight. (AlPac EIA Main Report: Appendix 1:1-2.35)

> Alberta Pacific's EIA says that dioxins and other chlorinated organics accumulate in the fatty tissues of fish and in fish livers. The EIA goes on to say that human ingestion of chlorinated organics would be slight because people don't eat fish liver. Well, people in our region do eat fish liver. In fact, loche or burbot liver is considered a delicacy. (Frank Pope, for the Shihta Regional Council, Edmonton: 5376)

Eight chapters and a well reasoned conclusion cover the topics of sustainable development and unsustainable exploitation, the use of scientific jargon in public hearings, ethnocentrism in scientific standards, expert versus local wisdom, job creation promises and reality, and the overall value of public participation. In each chapter, frequent use of verbatim hearings testimony augments the arguments being developed. The net effect of this technique is to weave the public selectively into the book as a contributing fourth author.

After hearing months of public testimony on the gaps between scientific understanding of the bleached kraft process and the inability to make precise judgements about downstream water quality, public health and toxicity, the AlPac Review Board recommended that the proposed mill not be built "at this time." "Further scientific studies" were recommended to determine if the mill could be built without serious hazard to life in the river and for downstream users. However, the proponent, AlPac, next sought and received a private audience with Mr. Getty, then Alberta's premier, after which Mr. Getty remarked publicly that the Review Board had failed to assess critically the information provided at the public hearings. A review of the review was commissioned. The new reviewer, Jackko Pöyry, a Finnish pulp and paper research consulting firm, concluded that its findings were consistent with the Review Board's assessment. Next, the provincial and federal governments announced a $10 million three-year study of the Peace, Athabasca and Slave rivers. Meanwhile AlPac decided to change its bleaching process by eliminating the use of molecular chlorine and substituting 100 percent chlorine dioxide. A Scientific Review Panel was struck to review the mitigative potential of this change, and in October 1990 the final reviewers concluded that the new process was feasible. The premier gave his approval to the new mill on 21 December 1990. At this point, the case study ends and the authors render their conclusions. The reader is not surprised to find them concluding that the EIA process as described is seriously flawed. As the findings of the initial Review Board were not binding on government, they were always open to new levels of review. A cynic would say that the environmental review process only ends when government achieves its desired ends. The authors want environmental hearings to occur early in the decision-making process, and they argue for public review of regional conservation and resource use plans. They strongly advise that public input be factored into resource use planning long before projects get to the public hearing stage, and long before government grants an approval-in-principle.

The Alberta public's noted challenge of both the constraints of the hearing process and the assumed superiority of the western science experts employed by government and the proponents indicate two promising areas for further research. Cindy Gilday (p. 173) sums up their potential:

> I think with this process, you have been launched into the next decade; the 1990s, when people will be listened to. The little hunter, the little trapper, the little people on the land are the ones that are going to be making decisions for people that will use our natural resources. I think this is what you have launched with a process that's very unique. It doesn't exist too much across Canada where the considerations of a province, Northwest Territories, and the national values are examined under a microscope like this. (Cindy Gilday, Review Board member, Prosperity: 7628-7629)

I share Ms. Gilday's optimism for change because of the growing public mistrust of deficit government and its programs, and the rising interest of civil society (the privately owned, market directed, voluntarily run or friendship based non-governmental organizations) in taking responsibility for environmental stewardship. In transferring some of the responsibility from deficit government to civil society for the ongoing maintenance of environmental stewardship, local experts and aboriginal elders will have the opportunity to move beyond merely voicing their concerns. Consideration of their traditional environmental knowledge and regional experience base will be necessary in order to conserve resources and ensure renewable harvests. Simply put, how can deficit governments retain control of the environmental agenda when they cannot afford to maintain it? A new balance must therefore be struck among the state, civil society and the individual. This new balance has the potential to become true co-management of the resources which are our birthright.

All in all *Winning Back the Words* is a delightful book. At $16.95 it is not too expensive to become a high school and university text, and its appeal to civil society environmental organizations should be pronounced. I also hope that its publication encourages others to contribute to the case study literature of public hearings. As oft referenced world leaders in this process, we, as Canadians, should be honing our skills on the cutting edge of its reform.

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Michael Robinson
The Arctic Institute of North America
The University of Calgary
2500 University Drive N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 1N4

A YEAR IN LAPLAND, GUEST OF THE REINDEER HERDERS. By HUGH BEACH. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993. Originally published in Swedish. 227 p., maps, illus. Hardbound. US$24.95.

Hugh Beach, one of the most experienced and knowledgeable anthropologists on the Swedish Saami, describes his early work among the reindeer herders in the Jokkmokk district of Sweden. The book is ethnography as literature, written in the first person from Beach's daily journals from his stay in Tuorpon Saami village from May 1973 through October 1974 (with some material from his 1975 journal), and framed by the author's personal reflections on "traditional" Saami society. Beach's view is similar to that of many anthropologists — that change among small-scale societies is bad. This view contradicts how many Saami view change, believing that modern transportation and improved communication create a better way of life. Beach admits he was filled with "out-dated or even false romanticism" (p. vii) toward the Saami, as he continued to live in a turf hut while his neighbors built modern cottages. Yet, at times, the author appears naive about how traditional the Saami were during his study, and he writes (p. 170) in a slightly melodramatic tone: "No one outside of Lillselet knew that we had arrived. Tomorrow would be soon enough to step into the technological world." Such statements seem inappropriate to describe people who regularly flew in helicopters, carried walkie-talkies and watched television. Clearly Beach's sentiments are with the old ways, and Beach is more interested in the passing generation than the future one. He uses dialogue with older Saami, mostly males, to explore several different topics, such as shaman drums or *yoiking*, traditional Saami singing. While the technique is effective, the book may feel disjointed at times to those unfamiliar with the region.

Beach structures the book around the major events in the Saami annual herding cycle — calving, spring migration, calf marking, herd separation, fall slaughter and autumn migration. Chapter 1 details how the author entered the world beyond Lapland's tourism, eventually gaining acceptance by offering companionship, labor and supplies (including cognac) to the herders. In chapter 2, Beach describes a long and painful walk through the vast mountains, when he joins the Saami families after their move to the summer village. While at the village, the author uses the major summer event of calf marking to introduce the reader to the herding industry in chapter 3.

The new reindeer calves must be identified and marked by the owner in the summer before they leave their mother. Marking involves cutting notches in the animals' ears according to the owner's register mark. At the end of July the reindeer are driven to the marking enclosures by aircraft and herders using dogs. Calf marking takes several days to complete, depending upon how the herds are scattered. The entire family travels to the calf marking enclosure, sets up tents, waits, and when the reindeer arrive, works around the clock. After the animals are marked and released, the families return to their summer villages, checking the herds occasionally by aircraft. They will not be collected again until the autumn slaughter in September. Following the frenzied pace of the calf marking, the summer activities consist of fishing, berry picking, and maintenance work on huts. The absence of reindeer work leaves plenty of time for visiting and "cooking coffee", and both are amply discussed in chapter 4.

The book concentrates heavily on the summer and early autumn; a concentration stemming from Beach's view of the Saami as a passing traditional people. These are the Saami's most traditional seasons, times when they have a direct relationship with the mountain resources that have shaped their existence. During that part of the year, the Saami reside near the remote Norwegian border close to their herds, where by law only they can live. Since there are no roads in these highland areas of Sweden, contact with the majority of Scandinavian society is restricted, limited to occasional visits