

'What the hell' ...

## The Gateway

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... is always the right decision.

# South Moresby: a dying treasure

by Bill Doskoch

What is all the fuss about some island 60 miles from nowhere? Why would anybody bother going to jail over it? And why should people lose their jobs to protect some trees?

Those are simple questions. Unfortunately, they are being applied to what is one of the most complex and emotion-charged issues of the decade — the preservation of the Queen Charlotte Islands off the northwest coast of British Columbia — and the answers are far from simple.

Many factors complicate this issue: the beauty and ecological uniqueness of the South Moresby area (see article on page 3); the desire of environmentalists to see it preserved as an undisturbed site; the forest companies' need for a timber and land base; the claims of some Queen Charlotte residents that their communities will be irreparably hurt if the logging industry is damaged; the unresolved land claims of the Haida Indians, who say they need the South Moresby area left undisturbed to maintain their traditional ways of life and culture; and the provincial government of British Columbia, which refuses to negotiate land claims and has never placed a moratorium on industrial development on the area while attempts were made to solve problems.

Media attention has been focussed on the area in the past several months for two reasons: the blockade of roads on Lyell Island (part of the South Moresby archipelago) which led to the arrest of 30 Haida and Burnaby MP Svend Robinson (NDP-Burnaby) and the Save the South Moresby Caravan, which travelled the country from the St. John's, Newfoundland and ended this past Saturday in Vancouver.

The actual problems extend back decades or even centuries, but the genesis of this recent flurry of protest can be found in the granting of Tree Farm License 24 to ITT Rayonier Ltd. (now Western Forest Products Ltd.). The license extended all the way to the south tip of Moresby Island and included stands of huge old-growth cedar, hemlock and spruce trees which re-

quired hundreds of years to reach their immense size.

The terrain and climate were suitable for profitable logging and the location was far from the prying eyes of an awakening environmental movement — except for one pair, Thom Henley's.

Henley was living in Alaska in 1973 and upon the return part of an aborted kayaking trip to South America when he took the advice of a friend and paddled out to the Queen Charlotte Islands. There, he spent several weeks exploring the islands and decided when he arrived at South Moresby that it was "the most beautiful forest I've ever seen."

In October 1974, after moving to the Charlottes, he helped found the Islands Protection Society, which he describes the first grassroots umbrella environmental group dedicated to the protection of the Charlottes.

One of the newly-formed group's first acts was to petition the provincial NDP government of Premier Dave Barrett for a moratorium on logging until an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) could be performed to assess all the values of the area and develop a plan for the future of the area.

The government refused, thus setting the tone for the next 12 years in which Henley claims "there has been not one day of moratorium on logging" during the tenures of the four study groups which have examined the area.

"We've lost the northern quarter of that wilderness so far," argues Henley. "The compromise has already been made. It's been called the finest example of temperate



Photo Bill Doskoch

rain forest left in the world and is eligible for designation as a UNESCO world heritage site for both its cultural and natural values. Any more development would ruin it as a world heritage area and would leave it just like any other park.

"The United Nations recommends that countries set aside five per cent of their land base for watershed protection and ecological reserves," he said. "In B.C. we've reserved two per cent. If we can't afford to set aside 15 per cent of the Queen Charlottes, or two-tenths of one per cent of the forest land base of B.C., then there's something seriously wrong."

It wasn't a question of being anti-logging or being opposed to multiple-use plans, he said, but in terms of historical, ecological, scientific and limited tourism usage, the protection of the area should be considered part of a total multiple-use concept for B.C.

One argument made against Henley's approach is made by Robert Long, a tour company operator in the Charlottes and president of its Chamber of Commerce.

"What people like Mr. Henley don't consider is the effect their plans have on people or communities," he said.

The economy of the Charlottes depended on a strong logging industry to supply the infrastructure, he claimed, and if that base was eroded, the economy would plunge.

"To even suggest tourism can take over from logging is ludicrous," he said. "You have to be able to get customers here cheaply and you must remember you're competing with Alaska and Hawaii. And what if you get so many people that it's not wilderness anymore? It all makes media sense but not business sense. It takes a strong logging industry to keep those 737s

[jet air service] coming or to have three ferries a week."

Long advanced what he called a "position of reasonable compromise": to protect 80 per cent of the 560 square miles under dispute in some type of park with the other 20 per cent open to multiple-use which would include timber harvesting.

He felt this would allow for protection of environmental values and the stability of the communities in the area.

Long said it was impractical to "protect climax forest just because it was climax forest. You have to concentrate on protecting those areas around watersheds and fish-bearing streams."

Long did not appear familiar with the Haidas, but would only say that he "did not criss-cross the country to disparage anything the Haida had to say" but was not clear on

continued on page 17

## Trimesters and more grad students in future

by Greg Halinda

The University of Alberta should give serious consideration to the establishment of a trimester system and to increasing the graduate to undergraduate ratio.

So reads one of the many proposals in "The Next Decade and Beyond: A Plan for the Future", a look at the U of A's future plans recently published by the university.

U of A president Myer Horowitz opens the volume with "an invitation to participate", welcoming all concerned to join the debate generated by the various proposals within. He terms it "a discussion of how this university might best adapt

curriculum for all undergraduate degrees, the role of computers in student education and academic staff applications, and promoting the international exchange of staff and students.

Some specific recommendations: ● the number of graduate students in thesis programs should be increased over the next 15 years to correspond with decreases in the number of undergraduate students. ● all students receiving an undergraduate degree from the U of A should have the elements of a core curriculum designed to provide the basis of a liberal education (applies also to pre-professional and professional programs).

to changing needs in the concluding years of this century and the beginning years of the next."

The report was initiated in 1984 and was the successor to a U of A Senate report entitled *The Purpose of the University*, which was published in 1982.

Horowitz admitted the report asked more questions than had answers, and contained some recommendations which are not "earthshaking", but said "the purpose of it was to generate discussion, both inside and outside the university, and to show where our thinking is at the present time."

The report covers areas like the U of A's research programs, a core

● a goal should be set to provide every staff member with a personal microcomputer work station by 1990.

● initial post-secondary instruction for high school graduates not entering U of A directly should be arranged in consultation with community colleges in Edmonton and Northern Alberta.

● research studies and doctoral programs in areas of agriculture, forestry, energy, and transportation are to be encouraged and supported at the university.

● program standards should be established which will be recognized as high in relation to professional programs in North America.

● the university should develop an Institute for International Affairs in cooperation with the Government of Alberta to increase the number of links to Pacific Rim countries and to encourage the exchange of staff and students.

The input the university receives in the next several months will form the basis of a final report on the university's future, which is due out in the early fall.

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of "The Next Decade and Beyond: A Plan for the Future" should contact the Office of Public Affairs, 423 Athabasca Hall. Telephone: 432-2325.

### Gateway Editor Elections!

see page 5 for voter list and other details