



Bulletin

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BAN ON ATLANTIC SALMON FISHING

In a statement to the House of Commons on April 24, the Minister of Fisheries, Mr. Jack Davis, announced the closure for at least six years, of commercial fishing on the Atlantic Coast of Canada "dependent on salmon runs returning to a number of the famous producing rivers in the maritime provinces". A serious decline in the number of salmon returning to the Saint John, Miramichi and Restigouche Rivers was the reason, Mr. Davis said, for the Government's decision.

The Minister's statement to the House follows:

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Because much of the salmon fishery in the Port aux Basques area of Newfoundland is also dependent on these runs destined for mainland streams, it, too, will be closed beginning in May of this year.

While the situation will be reviewed annually, it is expected that at least one full cycle, namely six years, will elapse before the stocks in these rivers will be rebuilt to the point where large-scale commercial operations can commence once more.

The advice of existing river-management committees on which the fishermen themselves serve will be sought not only in respect of the duration of these closures but also as to the manner in which the runs can best be rehabilitated.

FISHERMEN'S COMPENSATION

Compensation will be paid to commercial fishermen whose earnings are affected by these river closures. Payments will be negotiated on an individual basis and the formula which will be employed will be worked out in close consultation with the fishermen themselves.

These closures will not apply to salmon returning to the streams in Newfoundland and Labrador. They do not apply, also, to salmon returning to the rivers in Nova Scotia.

Historically, the total mainland take accounted for approximately one-half of the over-all catch of Atlantic salmon by Canadians. This volume has been sharply reduced. It has fallen by more than 80 per cent since 1967. On the Miramichi, where escapements formerly were measured in the tens of thousands of large fish, they are now measured in the hundreds.

REASONS FOR LOSS

There are several reasons why our stock of large mainland salmon has become seriously depleted. They are: first, heavy fishing by foreign nations on the high seas; second, heavy fishing by our own commercial fishermen; and third, pollution in some of our own main salmon rivers themselves.

We are moving quickly to deal with pollution. There has been a significant improvement in water quality on the Miramichi, for example. But commercial fishing, especially on the high seas, is another story. In spite of agreements to the contrary, the catch by

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