

Government Orders

With regard to the future, the report states:

In that logging, industrial and urban development has advanced in an unplanned manner—

—in other words, haphazard and chaotic—

—this area could greatly benefit from a comprehensive land-use plan.

An hon. member: A SoCred manner.

Mr. Riis: Well, my hon. colleague says that this is often the way the Socreds approach development throughout the province. I am pleased to say that the regional district of that area has now taken the task upon itself to ensure that comprehensive land use planning occurs in a thoughtful manner in the future.

The report continues:

Resolution of water conflicts and removal of the very old and obsolete Hydro Dam on the middle Shuswap River would increase fish production substantially. Intensive large scale agricultural activities with major water demands or effluent production must be isolated from the streams. Many opportunities exist for habitat restoration.

Anyone from that area would be very familiar with that.

Last, I want to refer to the North Thompson system. This is a system that is valuable in terms of the production of sockeye, chinook and coho salmon. Of course, I am just referring to the salmon. I could refer to the great and famous Kamloops trout that is found throughout this entire area. It is important particularly in terms of the sports fishery.

With regard to the present status of the North Thompson system, the report states:

Streams flowing into the lower North Thompson River are under water-use pressures—from agriculture. Logging is the most widespread concern in the watershed.

This is particularly as a result of some clear-cut practices that are open to some serious question. I am pleased to say that the Canadian National twin-tracking impact has been mitigated.

For the future, the report states:

Forest harvesting practices must be improved in order to protect the [fisheries] habitat. Water-use conflicts in the lower basin area must be resolved with the Province.

I could go on and on in some detail, Madam Speaker, but I simply want to say that this aspect of the report by the New Democratic Party Fraser River Task Force entitled, *The Fraser River Under Siege* and chaired by the hon. member for Okanagan-Shuswap makes these

points. Of course, if anybody is interested in copies of this, they are certainly available.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not refer to the serious challenges facing steelhead in the Thompson Basin, particularly north and south of the Spences Bridge area. Not many years ago there used to be 20,000 or more steelhead in the area which, of course, was the basis for a major sports fishery. I have had the experience and pleasure of participating in steelhead fishing in the past myself and must say today things have changed dramatically. There are not 20,000 steelhead in the river any longer, there are fewer than 1,500. Just a few weeks ago, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans allowed commercial salmon fishermen to set their nets during the height of the Thompson River run and an estimated 600 steelhead were killed in the fishery which was meant to harvest surplus chum salmon in the lower Fraser Valley. They assumed that only 15 steelhead would be lost but 600 were lost. There is a real fear now in the area that the steelhead run itself may even face extinction as a result of this unfortunate incident.

• (1700)

As a result, much of the interior hospitality industry which is dependent in this season on the steelhead run is literally going out of business. Many places have had to close because the fishermen and fisherwomen simply are not there because the fish are not there. I am disappointed personally because, not being the greatest fisherman, and because of the number, I will probably not catch any this year.

In closing, I want to say that we support Bill C-74 and will vote in favour of it. We will be watching the government closely to ensure that this whole matter of enhanced convictions, if you like, in terms of fines for general offences and especially fisheries habitat offences is an important step in the right direction. We will be watching the government as a result of my colleague's amendment, which will require annual reports to Parliament, in terms of the number of convictions associated with habitat destruction. I hope this will ensure that the Canadian fishery will advance in terms of increasing stocks and a more sophisticated use in terms of fisheries management.

Mr. Rex Crawford (Kent): Madam Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in the House today and give my comments on Bill C-74, an act to amend the Fisheries Act. I am also pleased that, as a member from southern Ontario, my colleagues have given me the