

out that in fact the minister and the department have not lived up to the obligations of this legislation.

I think it is a nice watch-dog situation. This of course will be ongoing from government to government in the future. Again, it is an excellent initiative by the hon. member for Prince George—Bulkeley Valley.

Once again, Madam Speaker, I want to refer you to the work that has been recently completed by the federal New Democrats in terms of a task force on the Fraser River. We recognize this as the jewel in the British Columbia crown. Here is a river that makes sense for so many reasons, not least of which is the sports and commercial fishery attached to it, but of course the fact that it is the unifying ecological element that provides life for so much of the province of British Columbia, draining about one-third of that province.

Under the chairmanship of the hon. member for Okanagan—Shuswap, a number of New Democrat colleagues who have been studying the entire watershed of the Fraser. This has been done for the first time. An excellent job was done by some very dedicated members of Parliament holding hearings throughout the region. This is on an ongoing basis. It will occur in the future as well to try to understand clearly all the implications in terms of the problems and challenges associated with that watershed.

Part of the hearings revealed an excellent presentation by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans from the Pacific Region. It presented a paper entitled, *The Fraser: A River of Opportunity*, in which it points out throughout the entire drainage some very serious concerns. I want to raise these today briefly, if I have time.

For the Thompson—Nicola system, mainly of course recognizing the production of chinook, coho, and pink salmon, the officials indicate in the paper that its present status is:

An area of severe-water use conflicts that significantly impacts production due to physical destruction of the habitat (e.g. water diversions, channelization, etc.) low flows and high temperatures.

The paper continues:

Water management legislation does not recognize fish as a legitimate user of water. Water quality impacts originating at Kamloops (i.e. sewage and pulpmill) make this area one of the three largest water quality hotspots on the entire Fraser River (in addition to the Prince George—Quesnel and [the greater Vancouver regional

district areas]). Recent co-operative efforts have been made on the Bonaparte, Nicola and Deadman Rivers to restore or develop production through habitat improvement and better water management. Impacts of the Coquihalla Highway have been mitigated.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the superb work being done by the tribal council and the Indian bands in the central interior in terms of taking the leadership in providing enhanced habitat for the fishery to the extent of developing their own nurseries. The native people of the area need to be commended for the leadership that they provided in developing fishery stocks of one kind or another in the area.

The report continues:

This is an area where greater water use conflicts will occur. The inadequacy of water rights legislation must be addressed. Encroachment of linear facilities (highways, pipelines and railways) into habitat and salmon migration pathways are of concern and must be closely controlled.

Now, this becomes very scary. It continues:

A large unstable rock cliff will eventually result in a slide at Black Canyon on the Thompson River. This is a special concern due to its inevitability and the potential to block the river.

This is almost a shocking revelation and something we have to address very seriously.

You will recall, I am sure, Madam Speaker, being a student of geology, that back in geologic time that particular part of the river was actually dammed off as a result of a major shift of glacial till into the valley and the entire system reversed and ran down through the Okanagan Valley. Over time, erosion occurred and the Thompson River now flows into the Fraser River and becomes part of that great drainage basin.

In passing, I should also mention that with regard to the North Thompson—Shuswap system, again recognizing the production of sockeye, chinook, coho and pink, the report states:

The habitat basin in this area is under very great pressure from forest harvesting, wood processing, urbanization, recreation, agriculture, water diversion and flood control. Low flows, high temperatures and water quality are constant limitations to fish production in many streams. Shuswap Lake is one of the most important sockeye production lakes in B.C. However, it has been subjected to the greatest developmental pressures of all B.C. sockeye producers. The invasion of the aquatic nuisance plant Eurasian Milfoil into this system is also of concern to salmon habitat.