

Fishing Industry

primarily benefit the financial institutions which currently hold mortgages on those expensive vessels.

While the Davis plan failed and the catching capacity expanded rapidly, the department's ability to increase management, research, and enforcement skills, remained virtually stagnant. Government restraint has led to a situation of crisis management leading to understandably conservative estimates of permissible catch, of fleet manipulation, particularly in the herring season; projected openings, then a withdrawal of the opening; openings when few fish were available, and even fewer openings, further reducing the income of many of the fishermen on the west coast.

The New Democratic Party calls for greater research staff and enforcement staff. These calls have been partially answered. However, what we have is far from adequate to meet the challenges facing the fishing industry. Research is virtually all directed to the management program because of the critical state of the salmon and herring industry. Long term and innovative research has been put aside delaying longer-term understanding of this important renewable resource.

The support and enthusiasm which met the announcement in 1977 that the B.C. and the federal government were embarking on a \$150 million salmonid enhancement program is now fading. It is fading this year particularly because of low salmon returns, but also because of the growing awareness that our laws really are not working to protect our valuable estuaries, our rivers, streams and lakes from pollutants. Just as Ontario and the Atlantic provinces see acid rain, industrial and municipal pollution destroying valuable recreational water resources, so do people in British Columbia see their efforts in salmon enhancement cancelled by destructive logging operations, hydroelectric dams, municipal and industrial wastes.

We share the enthusiasm for the salmon enhancement program and its particular role in the future for our remote coastal communities and the possibilities it could provide for economic development for our native people seeking economic and employment opportunities for their people. We feel the futility of spending sums of money on enhancement when we see the same governments neglecting to prevent further habitat destruction and fish loss.

The case of the Fraser River should amply illustrate our concerns and our demands that government take seriously the provisions of the Fisheries Act to prosecute violators leading to the degradation of our fishery habitat. The Fraser River coalition, which is an amalgamation of fishermen, environmental groups and community groups concerned about the health of the Fraser River, met with our B.C. federal caucus in Port Coquitlam a week ago Saturday and gave us an excellent slide presentation of the kind of abuse to which we are putting our most valuable salmon producing river. The Fraser River, which is responsible for up to 50 per cent of the salmon catch in British Columbia, and contributes approximately \$100 million to the B.C. economy, is under attack from many quarters. The slide presentation pointed out the kinds of abuses that we, as a society, continue to inflict upon our rivers across Canada.

The Fraser River, aside from being a salmon producing river, unfortunately also happens to be a major transportation route for freighters, tugs, barges and log booms. It supplies water and power along its length. It serves as an industrial and municipal sewer practically from its headwaters to the Fraser River delta. The presentation to the caucus leaves one bewildered at the flagrant disregard for the quality of water in our most important fish producing river. We know from the coalition reports that in the lower Fraser River alone there are five forest product mills whose effluent escapes into the Fraser River along with wood fibre and assorted toxic chemicals. There are eight metal industries on the lower Fraser which discharge heavy metals and tons and tons of iron lead and zinc annually into the Fraser River and its estuary. We have at least ten concrete plants which dump waste concrete illegally from time to time along with another toxic chemical, calcium hydroxide, which again affects salmon and its feeding sources.

There are chemical plants which contribute to further pollution in the lower Fraser River. We have at least 20 landfill sites along the Fraser River with leachates, including wood wastes, gyproc dumping, sand fill dumping, auto dumping, and other leachates too numerous to be identified and certainly too numerous to have been detected or any charges laid. There are storm sewers up and down the lower Fraser River resulting in untold chemicals entering the river at that stage. Dredging is carried on. There are dams present. Proposed dyking will change the flow of the river. This will lead to degradation of the salmon habitat. Probably the major cause of pollution in the lower Fraser River is the sewage treatment plants. These are plants which have only primary sewage treatment and again release hundreds of thousands of gallons of chlorine and other toxic chemicals into the Fraser River.

A statement by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts) has indicated that the Fraser River estuary is down to 30 per cent and, if there is any further loss, there will be no environment left. There will not be any environment if we allow further dredging and industrial development along these river banks. The Fraser River is dying a slow death, as reported in *The Fishermen* paper in Vancouver. While we spend hundreds of thousands, and indeed, millions of dollars on the salmon enhancement program we allow the Fraser River, which produces those salmon, to be killed by industrial and municipal pollution.

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The delta where these wastes are going to end up is where the young salmon become acclimatized to the salt water, feeding in the salt marshes along the sides of the river. This place in all of British Columbia is where it is seen fit to use a river as a major sewer. The residents of the Fraser Valley have been lobbying governments for years and years to no avail.

The record of the government with regard to salmon protection is dismal. The salmon enhancement program has been sold to the people of British Columbia and they have accepted it as a necessary item. We are requesting the government to