

the Asian community, not only as a food source for themselves but to the restaurant industry.

• (1600)

The Asian restaurant industry is a vital part of our tourist trade in Vancouver and on the lower mainland, so the community of Surrey has a vital stake in the fishing industry. It is important that that industry survive, prosper and grow.

Surrey is a family community. It does not have a large industrial base. It relies on small industry, on fishing, and it is in many ways a bedroom community for metropolitan Vancouver. The families there need the stability in order to ensure that they are able to pay their own mortgages, to provide the necessary income for the municipality in the form of taxes to operate our schools, and recreation facilities. Anything that threatens the viability of the fishing industry threatens the viability of Surrey itself.

We have a number of issues that right now are critical to the viability of that industry. Some relate to things that are taking place directly in Surrey. I will give one example called the Surrey Bend. It is a fish habitat area on the Fraser River. It is the last freshwater marsh on the Fraser River estuary and covers several hundreds of acres. It is a habitat for young fish fry coming down the Fraser River before they go out to sea. It is a source of nutrients. It is teeming with other wildlife and it is being threatened by industrial development that simply wants to backfill it for cheap industrial land.

The fisheries department has started to look at it, but even at this late date has not ordered a full environmental impact study. The municipality is desperately trying to rezone the land as environmental and recreational to prevent it.

This type of fish habitat is what Bill C-74 must protect. There are some good parts of this bill because it does talk about increasing the fines and getting better information necessary to protect the fish habitat. We also have a major problem of pollution on the Fraser River as it relates to fishing.

The quality of the water in the Fraser River by the time it reaches Surrey is no longer suitable for agricultural purposes. It threatens, according to people within the fisheries department, the survival rate of young fish stock.

Government Orders

The quality of water is damaged by upstream sewage being dumped into it. Some of that sewage is raw. Some has at least been given primary treatment. It is being polluted by pulp mills upstream at Prince George and Kamloops. At places in the Fraser River 2 per cent of the water is pulp mill effluence.

It is being threatened by lumber practices on the Fraser River, including log haulage and the dumping of hog fuel near it or along its banks with the leakage going into the Fraser River.

We have other major environmental threats to the Fraser River, including the diversion that Alcan is now undertaking on the Nechako River. This government, combined with the provincial government, has given them permission to go ahead without an environmental impact study on a diversion that is going to drop the level of the Fraser River three feet at Hell's Gate.

The damage to the fishing industry is totally unknown. We are threatening the whole viability of the Fraser River fishing industry by allowing Alcan to divert without an environmental assessment. It is all very nice for Bill C-74 to talk about the fact that it is going to increase penalties and allow for the collection of better information.

What we have seen repeatedly is this government and the provincial government in British Columbia—which in B.C., we have learned, is what you get when you amalgamate the Tories and the Liberals—not enforcing the existing legislation that they have.

Under the B.C. Water Act, fish and wildlife are not even recognized as users of water. We have the federal government simply not even enforcing the powers that it now has.

Clearly, we have had examples in B.C. of the existing legislation not being used. I would like to quote from my Department of Fisheries and Oceans memo of November 1988:

We—

This is DFO officials:

—have determined that DFO friendly corporations enjoy relative immunity from the Fisheries Act.

The memo went on to state:

It must be appreciated that DFO habitat enforcement has reached an all time inconsistency.