

PACIFIC SALMON TREATY

The implementation of the 1985 Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) and the accompanying Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been a source of strong disagreement between Canada and the USA.

The Parties agreed in the PST to conduct their fisheries within the framework of two broad principles: conservation and equity. The conservation principle requires each Party to conduct its fisheries and salmon enhancement programs so as to prevent overfishing and provide for optimum production. The equity principle provides that each Party should receive benefits equivalent to the production of salmon originating in its waters.

Following two years of unsuccessful government-level negotiations, Canada made a proposal to submit the equity dispute to binding arbitration in 1995. The USA rejected that proposal but agreed to non-binding mediation. The mediation process took place between October 1995 and February 1996, but ultimately failed. However, the mediator, Ambassador Chris Beeby of New Zealand, did submit a proposal for a solution to the equity issue (the Agreement between the Parties specified that it could not be released publicly).

Canada-U.S. stakeholder negotiations reached an impasse in spring 1997, and subsequent government-to-government negotiations broke down on June 20. On July 22, the U.S. rejected Minister Axworthy's June 26 written request for binding arbitration and proposed instead the appointment of two prominent individuals, one from each country, to reinvigorate the stakeholder process to make a positive difference before the 1998 fishing season.

On July 25, Canada appointed Dr. David Strangway (former President of the University of British Columbia) as Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Pacific Salmon. The U.S. appointed William Ruckelshaus (a former Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency). Dr. Strangway will report to the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Fisheries and Oceans. Mr. Ruckelshaus will report to the President and Secretary of State. The special representatives have already met stakeholders and Canadian and U.S. officials. They are expected to produce a joint report by the end of December.

In mid-July, Alaska fishers began taking large numbers of Canadian sockeye salmon in the Noyes Island fishery. The Canadian Government issued a strong protest to the U.S. State