

TO IMPROVE EASTERN SALMON

Efforts to improve Atlantic salmon stocks in the Maritime Provinces, Quebec and Newfoundland are to be intensified both by the federal Department of Fisheries and the provincial agencies concerned, and specific recommendations for legislation to this end are to be made by the federal-provincial Co-ordinating Committee on Atlantic Salmon, which held its two-day annual meeting in Ottawa last week.

Several proposals were made by an advisory group which met at the same time and held two joint meetings with the Co-ordinating Committee. Commercial and angling associations in the Atlantic provinces are represented on this advisory committee. The suggestions made dealt with regulations as to netting, open seasons, control of poaching in certain areas, the stocking of streams from salmon hatcheries, and mitigation of the damage done to salmon populations by the spraying of forests with DDT in efforts to wipe out the spruce budworm. In this connection the Co-ordinating Committee reported that a search was being made for an insecticide other than DDT which would not harm fish.

Members of the advisory committee read briefs from the Miramichi Salmon Association, the Atlantic Salmon Association, the Nova Scotia Fish and Game Association, La Société Co-operative des Pêcheurs de Carlton, Carlton sur Mer, Quebec, and the Commercial Fisheries of Nova Scotia. These briefs contained a number of recommendations including those above and others dealing with the use of angling lures on salmon streams.

The Sub-Committee on Regulations is to consider several other recommendations and report to the Co-ordinating Committee on the advisability of new legislation with respect to salmon fishing. Deputy Minister of Fisheries George R. Clark, who is chairman of the Committee, and the deputy ministers of the provincial departments concerned are to meet again in Quebec City on March 7 to decide future policies of the Committee.

The advisory committee, in its submission, expressed the opinion that the present programme of the Department of Fisheries and the Fisheries Research Board of Canada merited the full confidence and commendation of the people of Canada, and it particularly commended the action taken by the Department in setting aside substantial areas of the upper waters of salmon streams as spawning sanctuaries.

The report on the Atlantic salmon management programme showed a wide variety of activities in the past year. Surveys of streams were continued by the federal Department of Fisheries to determine the extent and suitability of spawning and rearing areas. The number of rivers examined now totals approximately 200.

Salmon enumeration and other basic studies conducted at the Beechwood power project and on the Tobique river in New Brunswick showed a much lighter run of spawners than had been anticipated. One reason for this, it was felt, could be the spraying of adjoining timberstands with DDT, causing far higher losses than were originally thought.

Other counting trap data showed an eight-fold increase in the return of spawners to Big Salmon River, New Brunswick, and a substantial part of this run was credited to the 1250 post-smolts released in the river system in 1956. Early-late run experiments were conducted on the LaHave River and River Philip in Nova Scotia and encouraging results were obtained although no conclusions could yet be drawn.

Predator control was continued on the Miramichi and St. Mary's Rivers in New Brunswick and was extended to the Margaree River on Cape Breton Island where results would not be confounded by the spruce-budworm control programme.

Stream improvement work conducted by the Fisheries Department's engineering branch included remedial work at falls on Big Salmon River, New Brunswick, Round Hill River, Nova Scotia, and Great Rattling Brook, Newfoundland. Obstructions were removed on the upper LaHave River, Nova Scotia, and on Middle Brook and Point Leamington River, Newfoundland. Major fishway construction in the Newfoundland programme included the completion of the Indian Falls fishway on the Indian River. Repairs and reconstruction were carried out on fishways on a number of rivers in the Maritime provinces.

A highlight of the work in Newfoundland was the transfer of a run of spawners from Rattling Brook, which is being developed for power purposes, to nearby Great Rattling Brook. A total of 653 fish were transferred, and tagging of a representative number indicated that the transplanted fish had moved upstream following their release.

Hatchery distributions for the 1957 season were in excess of 11,000,000 fish throughout the three Maritime provinces.