

3. The Public Response

The photographs in this brief reveal the spectacle of masses of dead fish on the surfaces of the pools of the river and spread along the banks. Biologists classify this as a one hundred per cent fish kill.

The camera could not record the nauseating smell of rotting fish and polluted water which pervaded the entire valley in the warm days of July adding to the justifiable indignation of the people living there. Public response was immediate and it continues.

The first response was to build a small temporary earth dam across the Presquile River to impound the flow of polluted water from the United States into Canada. This served two purposes. One was to impound a sufficient volume of water so that by suddenly breaching the dam an increased flow of water would help to flush the river and its banks so as to wash the masses of dead fish downstream. The second purpose was to inform the public. The builders of this small dam are mature and responsible citizens; some of them are veterans of the 1939-45 war. They have the respect for life and our environment which is the mainstay of government. They saw that violence had been done to their river valley, and being men of both action and of thought, they reacted in a way which would draw direct attention to their problem and which they hoped would start the cleansing of the river banks.