

Dec. 31, 1938.

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Sir:-

In presenting this my annual report on the Fisheries of Upper Skeena for the season of 1938, I beg to draw your attention first of all the out of the ordinary season that we have had in weather. The maximum high water in the Skeena was about May 29th while other years it would be in July. With the hot dry year the water stages were low in the rivers practically all the summer, which interfered with the Indian Food Supply fishing and enabled a greater supply of parent fish to escape to the spawn areas than would have been expected from the amount of fish caught. Owing to the low water the Indian Food Supply fishing at Hagwilget was disappointing and some of these Indians were forced to proceed to Moricetown to secure their supply. In fact the supply of parent Sockeye on the Bulkley headwaters was most surprising to your Inspector after what he had encountered at Hagwilget and Moricetown. The dry weather continued on into the latter part of September and then there was about a month of wet weather but not extreme. The fall has been warm and mild with very little frosts, "that is extreme", so the spawn beds have been covered at an average depth with water and good results should have attained on them.

The runs of the different species on all the Skeena Areas has been all that could be desired. The Springs were heavy, the Sockeye fairly heavy, Pinks heavy and the Cohoe extra heavy. The only exception noticed by your Inspector was the Quinnigese of the Naas Area which was disappointing.

The Sport fishing for Trout this season has been very good and better results were obtained in Lake Kathlyn this year than for many previous years. This increase in Lake Kathlyn was no doubt due to the plantings that were made during the past few years and to the elimination of coarse fish that has been going on under the auspices of the game board of the Smithers Chambers of Commerce. The Sport fishing in Babine Lake this season was also very good and owing to the dry weather making it more accessible, it received a good deal more attention from Smithers, Topley and Burns Lake residents along with some parties that reached the area from Stuart Lake way.

(b)

We have no fishing fleets operating in this area and there does not seem any likelihood of any for some years.

(c)

There have been no new developments in the fishing and the only change from the usual trend was the fact that owing to the low water the Indian food supply fishing at Hagwilget was not so successful and the Indians had to come to Moricetown to secure their usual supply.

(d)

The only abuse occurs at Moricetown, where the Indians are prone to catching a larger supply of fish than they actually require for their food supply. This can not be remedied until there is a limit placed on the amount of fish that can be taken by them. Whatever Guardian is stationed at that point does his best but under the present conditions all one can do is to bluff and when the bluff is called, he is out of luck.

(e)

The close seasons are very well kept. At Moricetown the weekly close season is on Thursday afternoon and on Sunday, while at other points it is from Saturday night to Sunday night.

(f)

In this area there is an Inspector for the year round, while during the summer we have two Guardians, one stationed at Hazelton and the other at Moricetown as well as two Patrolmen stationed on Babine Lake. The Guardian at Hazelton is allowed the use of a saddle horse to cover his territory, while the Patrolmen at Babine are furnished with Departmental boats and engines. The Patrolman at Babine #1 has a flat bottomed boat equipped with a six horsepower Elto Outboard while the Patrolman at Babine #2 has Gipsy cruiser equipped with 21.1 H.P. Elto Outboard. This organization along with the co-operation of the Police and Game wardens takes care of illegal fishing.

(5)
Creeks are patrolled by Guardians, Patrolmen and your Inspector to see that they are not polluted by sawdust, mill refuse or other pollutions and that they are not blocked by log jams or windfalls. Clearing operations have taken place in Chicken or Kathlyn Cr draining Kathlyn Lake near Smithers. This work has been beneficial and the manner in which the work was carried on received the approbation of the Smithers Chamber of Commerce at whose bequest it was carried out. In addition creeks at Babine Lake were cruised by the Resident Engineer of the Fisheries Research Board accompanied by the Inspector of the area to inspect the damage that has been done to the spawning beds and to estimate the cost of removing the causes of the damage.

(h) We have but one fishway in the area and this is located at Moricetown. This was in good shape and its beneficial results could be seen on the Morice River and Lake spawn areas.

(i) Spawning bed inspections were made on the headwaters of the main rivers and on the Babine Lake Area. On the Morice Lake area your inspector made the trip accompanied with an Indian. On the Babine area as well as the Kispiox and Quinnigese area of the Naas River he was accompanied by A. L. Pritchard of the Fisheries Research Board. The Morice River areas showed a very heavy run of Springs that would compare favorably with other years, a fairly heavy run of Sockeye that would compare favorably with the cycle year and an extra heavy run of Cohoe which were late arriving as well as a heavy run of steelhead.

The Babine areas received a heavy seeding of Sockeye, Springs and an extra heavy run of Cohoes. Pierre Cr. was the only exception of the Babine areas and this area was light although better than the cycle year. The run of Pinks was very heavy for an off year. The Kispiox showed a heavy run of Sockeye, a heavy run of Springs, extra heavy run of Cohoes and a heavy run of Pinks. The Quinnigese showed a very light run of Sockeye, no information regarding Springs and an extremely light run of Cohoes according to the Indian trappers.

In conclusion, it may be said that there have been no court actions required and that on the whole the Officers under me and myself have received co-operation from the Public in the discharge of our duties, and also, I received the fullest co-operation from the Officers under me to the best of their abilities.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

"A.R. McDonell"

James Boyd, Esq.,
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