

PRINCE RUPERT, B.C. Sept. 19, 1918

RE VISIT OF INSPECTION TO SPAWNING AREAS OF SKENA RIVER.

Sir:

I beg to submit the following report in connection with my recent visit to the head waters of the Skeena River.

I went direct from here to Burns Lake by the G.C.P. Railway, a distance of 317 miles, and from there walked to Babine Lake over the Anderson trail, a further distance of 32 miles. My reason for taking the Anderson Creek trail was that I might interview Mr. Anderson, a prospector who has mineral locations in this district and through long residence is well acquainted with the lakes and streams flowing into Babine Lake. Anderson Creek, the best salmon spawning area at the upper end of the lake is named after him, and my object was to find out what he knew about Taltapin Lake, and the falls in Anderson Creek which drains it. His information does not coincide with former information received, and according to what he says they form quite an obstacle, and would necessarily cost quite a sum to make Taltapin Lake accessible as a salmon spawning area.

I stayed at the Prospector's cabin all night and next morning met Guardian Hugh McLean with the new motor boat, and together we began an inspection of the principal creeks and salmon spawning areas of the lake.

Grizzley and Beaver Creeks are well stocked with parent fish, and up to that time very little fishing had been done by the Stuart Lake Indians in this vicinity.

Anderson Creek is as well supplied as I ever saw it and the fish were busily engaged spawning. One is sometimes inclined to question the expert theory with regard to this stream, that sockeye return only to the place where they were hatched, for the enormous drain on this particular creek for many years past, should in the order of things show a decided diminution, but the reverse is in evidence, and the sockeye are as plentiful this season as they were eleven years ago in this stream. I gave particular attention to the bars at the mouths of this and other creeks this season which reach away out into the lake, and there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the major portion of the sockeye making Babine Lake their spawning ground complete their operations in the aerated water amongst the wash brought down by the freshets and never go into the fast running water at all.

At Pierre Creek there is an abundance of salmon around the mouth, but there are also more Indians fishing in this vicinity than last season. It is a small stream and there cannot be much water in it during cold weather, but there is a splendid bar away out from the mouth which was crowded with sockeye.

Fulton River has about the same amount of parent salmon as last year and there were several families of Indians putting up their food supply at the mouth of this stream.

[PABC, GR 435
Box 43, File 385]

The Hatchery Creek was next visited and there is a very good run again this season, but it falls short considerably in comparison to last year. However, Mr. Crawford considers he has ample to fill the hatchery with the usual complement of eggs, and to stock Morrison Lake and the creeks feeding it. I met Guardian Fred Johnson here who was on one of his patrol visits with the other new gas boat, and we proceeded to the village and Post at Babine next morning, after accepting Mr. Crawford's hospitality for the night.

The Babine Indians, both at the old Fort, and the present village have had a hard time saving the hay for their stock this Summer, as it has been one of the wettest seasons on record, and as a consequence they have done very little fishing up to the present, and will have to be content with other varieties than the sockeye, which is their favourite.

The new patrol boats are quite a success, both Guardians agreeing that they answer their needs perfectly. A nice log house has been erected at Donald's Landing in accordance with the Chief Inspector's wishes, so now the boats can have proper care, and it will be a shelter for the men or other officials going in by that route, I walked out from Donald's Landing via Pinket Lake and arrived at Burns Lake on Saturday the 7th, leaving for the west bound train for Hazelton at A.M. Sunday.

Officer James Latham has done some hard travelling this season as the abnormal rain storms last fall had ~~been~~ carried out nearly all the bridges and crossings on his boat. The great floods have also changed the courses of the creeks, carried out log jams, etc., some beneficial and some otherwise. He reports the Blackwater log-jam washed out, and there are large quantities of salmon spawning in the upper as well as the lower Blackwater lake, whilst the creek connecting the two is simply alive with them. The families of Indians who formerly put up salmon at this place have removed to Kispiox, so that they may be near the railroad and civilization. It is the same all over in regard to the Indians. Shalm Geeze on the Skeena side of the Divide is also depopulated, and there is an exceedingly fine run of sockeye to this spawning area with nothing to disturb them. At Kiskagaa, a large village a little above the confluence of the Babine and Skeena Rivers, five families have left and more are likely to follow. These people have always fished in a canyon and have never used a barricade, but the fact that they are finding new homes away from the mouth of the Babine is good news. The interior country has been unusually wet during the early part of the Summer, consequently the high water very materially helped the sockeye run past the Forks and Agwilget Indians fishing villages.

I stayed over at Terrace for a couple of days, visited Guardian Goodwin at Kitsumkalum, and find everything satisfactory on his beat which extends from tide-water to Hazelton. Like the rest of the Interior there has been an abnormal amount of rain in this part of the district also.

I must say I was very fortunate during my visit, for with the exception of a shower at Terrace I saw no rain during the whole trip.

Trusting this will be found satisfactory, I am,
Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd) Stewart Norrie.

Overseer of Fisheries