DFO Archival Notes on Morice & Upper Bulkley spawning grounds
Compiled: KAR, 2009

Morice / Nanika

September 6th, 1928

"Sir: -

On Saturday I visited Moricetown where the indians are still doing a certain amount of fishing. I found that the water in the Bulkley River is very low and at that stage the fish have much more difficulty ascending than when the water is higher. . . . The Indians at present are getting chiefly cohoe, but there are quite a number of sockeye also in the river. There are however, quite a number of sockeye above the falls, and I do not wish you to think that the spawning grounds of this river will not be seeded on account of the falls at Moricetown, but I believe a good deal of improvement could be made there, and in a case such as at present, where the water is very low, possibly a number of sockeye that come late could more easily reach the spawning grounds." (A. Mackie to J.A Motherwell).

October 30th, 1928

". . . On September 26th, I visited Moricetown Falls on the Bulkley River. In accounting for ten fish going over the falls, five were cohoes, three were sockeye and two were large steelheads. An old Indian, with a safety rope around his waist in Alpine fashion, was catching one of these three varieties every five minutes with the aid of a long pole with gaff hook attached.

I visited Agwillgate Canyon the same day but found little to be seen there. I was assured, however, that there had been a good run of sockeye up the Bulkley River." (Robert Gibson to J.B. Babcock)

December 14th, 1928

". . . The Morice Lake information is indebted to Harry McLean guide prospector, and trapper who has been in the Morice Lake district the past four or five seasons. This year he was guide and boatman for Swannell the surveyor who was mapping the Morice country. He has informed me that he had never seen before, as many and as large fish as were on the Morice Lake areas this season, springs, sockeye and cohoe. These areas should be well seeded." (A.R. McDonell to A. Mackie).

September , 1932

"On September 1st we visited the Nanika River, situated about three miles from the foot of the lake. This river is reported as being a sockeye and cohoe spawning ground, but outside of a few salmon seen finning in the lake adjacent to the outlet of the river, no salmon were seen, the reason I think being that it is a little too early in the season for the fish to be entering the river. This river is also glacial and highly discoloured, and it is difficult to locate fish on the grounds without the use of a boat. Nanika River drains Nanika and Kidprice Lake into Morice Lake, and is about 15 miles in length, with a good gravel bottom the whole length of the river.

On September 2nd . .. . we proceeded on foot down the Nanika River for about one mile. No salmon were observed as it is impossible for them to penetrate into the Kidprice or Nanika Lakes due to the fact that where the Nanika River leaves Kidprice Lake there is a sheer fall of approximately 40 feet.

We also flew to Atna Lake and River, another tributary of Morice Lake, on the 2nd. This river is also glacial and is frequented by sockeye and coho salmon, and at the time of our visit not any of these fish had apparently entered the river. After leaving Atna Lake we flew to the head where a number of small unnamed streams enter. There are of course all glacial and contain good gravel bottoms and may possibly be used as a spawning ground by sockeye salmon, although when in conversation with some of the Indians there they stated that they did not think sockeye spawned at the head of the lake. On questioning them further however they admitted they had not been in the vicinity of the head of the lake while the sockeye run was on.

After going over this locality by plane I am convinced that it is an important sockeye and spring salmon spawning area." (J. Boyd to J.A. Motherwell).

October 1st, 1932

"Dear Sir: -

I am enclosing herewith two copies of a salmon stream report covering McDonell Creek. This report was made out by guardian C. Millar of Moricetown. McDonell Creek is the sockeye spawning area for Zymoetz or Copper River and has its source in McDonell Lake in the territory south of Moricetown.

The escapement of sockeye to this point is apparently satisfactory and although the guardian counted only two hundred and fifty-three sockeye in two miles of the ten composing this spawning area this is no indication of the escapement as no doubt there were many fish on the grounds which he was unable to count owing to the depth of the water." (J. Boyd to J.A. Motherwell)

October 23rd, 1932

" . . Investigations along the upper Bulkley above Houston show a medium run of Springs, Sockeye and Cohoe on these areas this season." (A.R. McDonnell).

November 25th, 1932 – File 27-8

Smithers, B.C.

"In reply to your favor of the 16th. Instant file 27-8 re other fish using the Morice spawn areas other than springs and sockeye, I beg to advise you that steel-head and coho also frequent the area." (AR. McDonnell).

November 17th, 1932

"Dear Sir: -

Herewith find attached a copy of the spawning bed report covering the Morice River and Lake. This inspection was carried out by Guardian C. Millar with the assistance of A. Macdonald who last year held the position that Millar held in 1932.

The spring salmon run to the Morice River apparently was fairly heavy as at the time the writer visited this area in the early part of September, spring salmon appeared numerous on the beds and still running in the river.

Concerning sockeye, this inspection would indicate that the Nanika River is the only spawning are for this variety. This river flows out of Kidprice Lake into Morice Lake and is a spawning area of approximately fifteen miles.

The other streams mentioned by Millar were visited by the writer also and as they have never been inspected during sockeye run it was considered advisable to have Millar look over the streams when the inspection was made. His remarks on those streams would indicate that they are not frequented by sockeye or any other variety of salmon.

During my visit to the interior portion of the district while the sockeye run was on it appeared from observation that quite a number of sockeye pass over the Moricetown falls and as this variety does not proceed up the Bulkley River beyond its confluence with the Morice River it is logical to expect that the whole run of sockeye proceeds to the Morice Lake area. I am doubtful if the whole run spawns in the Nanika River although with 15 miles of spawning bed accommodation, it is possible, as this is the only spawning area for sockeye in this locality. However, I am inclined to believe that a percentage of this run may be beached spawners and have not been located during the inspection made each year. Morice Lake is subject to high winds which prevail most of the time, a condition which would make it difficult to locate beach spawning fish. I am, however, convinced that a good run of sockeye reached the spawning beds, basing this assumption on the run which passed the Moricetown falls." (J. Boyd.)

November 17th, 1932

Spawning bed inspection – Morice Lake Area (from Craig Millar's notes)

" . . . On the 18th (of October) we left for the Nanika River spawning area, which is the chief spawning area for sockeye salmon of the Bulkley River. On that day we located a large number of dead sockeye salmon which were lodged in a jam, about 10 miles below the falls. These were in such a state of decomposition that little could be learned as to their sex. On the 19th we reached the falls, but no other fish were seen on the trip."

November 28th, 1933

" . . .Below the three miles there are two large creeks North Fork and Gosnell creek entering the Morice from the other side of the river that you were on. Gosnell Creek is the first one from the lake and is from 6 to 10 miles from the Lake. North Fork is about as far again from Gosnell Creek.

I have seen both sockeye and springs just below Gosnell Creek in the Morice but from any information I have had sockeye do not go up the creek although it is frequented by Cohoe. I have never seen any sockeye or springs on any spawning beds below the North Fork although I have seen some spent sockeye drifting below that point. Cohoe go up the North Fork.

It must be understood that on both trips that I went up the Morice in a boat, I always considered too late. In regards to my third paragraph, I presume that the question of not seeing any fish rising in the lake is what is not understood. In reference to this I may say that other years that I went in early on this area by horses that I always saw numbers of sockeye rising in the lake just above where the river leaves the lake. I always figured that these fish dropped back into the river to spawn. When these were not seen, I naturally concluded that these fish that play around the lake were on the spawning beds in the river. The current of the river is such that you very seldom find dead salmon along the banks. These are usually found on the bars away down the river.

. . . Re the fifth paragraph, I mentioned that the sockeye were further down the river. By this I mean that other years the sockeye were strung all along the river right up to the lake, this year they were not. The first that I could see were easily a mile from the lake. There was a good heavy showing at this point for about a quarter of a mile. When you average up the spawning area you have a light run for the spawning area.

The Nanika River from Morice Lake to the falls is at least 25 miles when following the river. All that distance is potential spawning area. I have never followed the river all the way so I cannot say how far down the river the fish spawn. I have seen sockeye spawning ten miles and six miles below the falls as well as close to the falls."

(A.R. McDonell to James Boyd)

December 1st, 1933

" . .In connection with the sockeye spawning beds of the Morice and Nanika rivers. During my inspection of these areas in 1932, only a fair number of sockeye were visible on the Morice beds and none on the Nanika. This I believe was due to the inspection being made too early. However, judging from the beds of both rivers, I would be under the impression that the Nanika River is the more suitable spawning ground of the two, although at the same time there is no doubt that a considerable number of salmon spawn in the Morice River." (J. Boyd to J.A Motherwell, referring to A.R. McDonnell's report)

September 7th, 1935

"Sir: -

I beg to advise you that I have just returned from the Morice Lake area and there found conditions generally very favorable for the reproduction of spawn. On the Nanika River I saw more fish rising than I have encountered previously. . . . .these were all in fine condition and not very ripe, all Sockeye. No dead fish were seen at any point.

On the Morice River were seen many fish, both springs and sockeye. These were all in good shape and seemed to be just coming on the spawn areas at that point. The water level in both river was very good and good spawning results should be obtained." (A.R. McDonell to James Boyd)

December 31st, 1935

"On the 27th, we continued on up the Morice River and forded Wright or Lamprey Creek and then proceeded up the right bank of this creek until we arrived at the head of Long, Seymour or McBride Lake. . . On the 29th we proceeded along . . to . . Morice Lake where we camped.
On the 30th I proceeded down to the foot of the lake and thence followed the Morice River down on the right bank about 6 miles. During the first two or three miles I did not see any salmon of any description but from there down a heavy run of Sockeye and a fairly heavy run of Springs could be seen breaking water and also spawning on the bars in the river. . . . the run would compare as far as Sockeye was concerned with nearly any year that I had been on the grounds.

On the 31st . . I went back (to the upper part of the river) to spend some more time on that area. On this trip I had more success and found plenty of Sockeye . . .

On the 1st of September, we left Long Lake and proceeded across to the Nanika River and followed along the left bank of same. . . . I proceeded on up the trail to nanika Falls. About ½ mile below the falls the river widens out into a sluggish stream for a distance of about 2 miles and probably about 100 yards wide. On this area Sockeye could be seen breaking water all the way along and a heavy run was in progress. . . . From what I could

see, I have no hesitation in saying that there was a heavy run of Sockeye on the Nanika this season and that it will compare favorably with what I have seen in other years."

July 25th, 1937

Re: Obstructions Kathlyn Creek

. . . I found that there was more stuff in it than was estimated . . nothing that stops fish but in places the water is held back allowing the silt to settle and cover the spawning area.
I understand that sockeye frequented it before the creek got so dirty but there have been none there for some years. . . I am of the opinion that it (cleaning out the creek) would have a beneficial result to the sport fishing and possibly sockeye will come back to the creek. (A.R. McDonell to James Boyd).

November 5th, 1937

"Inspector McDonnell states that pinks have never passed this point except on a few rare occasions. The fact of the matter is, that few pink salmon entering the Bulkley, seem to have any inclination to go beyond the falls, they confine their spawning activities to the river and streams flowing into same below that point.
The writer has visited this point on two occasions when sockeye and pinks were running and observed very few pinks endeavoring to negotiate the falls. It is also the writer's opinion that if the sockeye salmon passed the falls without difficulty, the pinks can also make the grade if they are so inclined." (J. Boyd.).

November 8th, 1937

. . . we proceeded along the right bank of the lake to where the Morice River leaves it and then along it for a distance of about four miles. This river owing to the depth and colour of the water is visible for about six or eight feet from the shore. We found the occasional dead sockeye and many springs as well as seeing the odd spring still alive in the water. The beds have been well stirred up and showed evidence of a heavy spawning. The dead fish were well spent and the sexes appeared to be about even. . . . The sockeye were practically all gone but from impressions received at Hagwilget and Moricetown through which the fish have to pass to reach this area, I have no hesitancy in saying that there had been a heavy run and that the area has received a heavy seeding by this species. . . . we proceeded up the lake to where the Nanika enters the Lake. The most noticeable thing to be seen is the amount of new drift along the shores of Morice Lake. On reaching the Nanika we could see the reason. The flood of the preceeding year had washed out new channels and instead of one main channel there were three. This took a lot of timber from along the banks which finally wound up on the shores of Morice Lake. Owing to the swift current of the river there was found no traces of salmon of any kind.
(A.R. McDonell to J. Boyd).

Bulkley

? 1927

Bulkley River

"Very little fishing was done at Hagwilget or Bulkley Canyons by Indians the bulk being done at Moricetown. Some illegal sales were made but upon being warned, the offenders desisted and there were no prosecutions. Hard times among the Indians were the cause of it. . . . The sockeye run was very good." (Author unknown – likely A. Mackie)

August 2nd, 1927

(telegram)

"Small lake head of Buckley (Bulkley) important sockeye spawning ground also whole of Buckley (Bulkley) River suitable for spawning and large supply of sockeye obtained from this river in fact reports received indicate this river second only to Babine and one of most important sockeye spawning areas this district in addition to other varieties." (A. Mackie to J.A. Motherwell).

August 8th, 1929

" . . . as far as Kispiox Village report – as follows –Philip Dam? Fishery approximately Mission Point – west side of Skeena River at the forks of Bulkley and Skeena Rivers yesterday morning was ? while I was ? this catch ? 111 salmon, 46 sockeye, 53 pinks 12 steelhead . . . at Kispiox River & Village 4 families are fishing with success having 230 on the drying racks as a result of the morning catch, approximately ? sockeye."

August 12th, 1929

"At Hagwilget.

.. . You will note where 1500 fish were taken on the 8th that only 30 sockeye were mentioned. This is wrong as 30 % was meant." (A.R. McDonell to J. Boyd)

November 16, 1926

"I am in receipt of information through the Soldier's Settlement Board that you have been granted unconditional water license to take 500 gallons of water per day from Vallee Creek, tributary to Bulkley River, and that you have been advised by the Water Recorder at Smithers that a fish ladder must be constructed to permit the uninterrupted passage of fish." (J.A. Motherwell).

January 27, 1927

"It would appear that the works contemplated are of such a nature that they probably would not prove to be a hindrance to the passage of fish. A dam only eighteen inches in height should ordinarily be surmounted quite easily. It will be necessary, however, for you to observe, after the works have been completed, whether ascending fish are actually prevented from proceeding up streams by the proposed works, in which case, it will be necessary for you to make a sufficient opening in the dam for such fish to pass through. The opening might be fitted with an open wooden box, fitted with an ordinary slide gate behind, so as to be able to close it off and conserve water during the times fish are not running." (J.A. Motherwell)

Sir:- Re: Sockeye Escapement

July 27th, 1932

"Sockeye appeared to reach Hagwilget Canyon on the Bulkley River a few days later than other season and while the water was high good catches were made at this point. The sexes were evenly divided and the run was quite satisfactory. During the high water there was practically no fishing at Moricetown and when the fishing did start the percentage of females was very great which would lead me to think that a large percentage of the run passed this point before the fishing started.

A second run appears to be in the river at the present time and on Friday and Saturday of las week one man could gaff two to three fish a minute. This run does not appear to have reached Moricetown yet."
(A.R. McDonell to James Boyd)

September 25th, 1932

"Sir: -
On the spawning area of the upper Bulkley River – i.e: east of Houston, I find that to date no fish other than spring salmon have arrived, a few of the latter having been seen at Houston, Topley, and Bulkley Lake, during the later part of August. I believe that fish reaching the ten foot fall in the river four miles west of Forestdale, would have difficulty in getting up owing to the low stage of water. Most of the people to whom I talked seemed to think it was too early in the season to expect any sockeyes or cohoes as yet."
(Craig Millar to James Boyd)

July 29th, 1935

(from telegram, A.R. McDonell to James Boyd)

. . "my opinion sockeye escape to date favorable, if run of equal duration will equal 1930, to date better than last year, observation from Hagwilget and Skeena below Hazelton . . .

(Main body of same letter)

In wiring you, I was bearing in mind that 1930 was the abnormal year and also a conversation that I had with an Indian at Hagwilget a few days before in which he stated that it was the best run in the Bulkley for 5 years.
. .. On the 25th the catch of sockeye (at Hagwilget) was over 1200 sockeye and this is considered the biggest catch to have been made in any one day in five years.

The water has been too high at Moricetown for successful fishing . . ."

(A.R. McDonell to J. Boyd)

August 28th,

"Basket trap of Louis Tommy was put in August 3rd and taken out September 7th, and was out five days in interim, on account of high water. Water fluctuated considerably but on whole was never too low to hinder escapement which was good all season. 91 permits were issued and records were kept on number of fish taken: 3,546 springs, 10,864 sockeye, 5,062 cohoes, 2,360 pinks and 831 steelheads."

September 13th

"Inspected Bulkley River and Bulkley Lake. At mouth of Morice Creek there were one pair of sockeye with white marks on head and tail about spawned out and gravel beds here and near lake were well churned over, evident that there had been a good seeding."

September 15th

"I visted McDonell Creek and Davis Lake and spawning beds seen are well worked over. There were eight pairs of sockeye and very old with whit marks, nearly spawned out and a few dead ones along creek. I met an Indian who said there were a lot of salmon here earlier."

October 7th

"I inspected Driftwood Creek and found no fish to be seen at this time near mouth of creek there has been some spawning, but further along the residents say they have never

seen any signs of salmon. Canyon Creek a short distance from Driftwood Creek at outlet and draining the same district, this report covers as conditions are identical."

October 8th

"Visited Toboggan Creek and saw no signs of salmon though informed by residents Mr Elliot and Mr. Ballard that salmon go up there later. Gravel near mouth of creek has been well worked over."

(J.A. Macdonald to J. Boyd)

August 10th, 1935

"It appears that the run of sockeye to the Bulkley River has been heavy but the percentage of one male to three females may have an influence on the results of this run." (A. Mackie to J.A. Motherwell)

Feb. 4th, 1937

Re: Kathlyn Creek

" . . . I cruised the creek from Lake Kathlyn to the Bulkley River and found considerable debris with, consisting of rotten windfalls that have fallen in the Creek from its banks and which in some paces have jammed it up. I would not consider that this debris stops the ascent of fish but it does hamper them to some extent. I would consider the debris curtails the spawning area to a great extent. . ."(A.R. McDonell).

March 8, 1937

Re; Kathlyn Creek

"Debris consists of fallen timber that has been ? and dropped into the Creek. As this rots it drops in the bed of the stream and is fouling the spawning area and covers the gravel with it. . . Estimate half a mile of spawning areas cut off by debris." (A.R. McDonnell).

July 25, 1937

Re; Kathlyn Creek

" . . Sockeye used to frequent the creek before it got so dirty but there have been none there for some years. I am of the opinion that it would have a beneficial result to the sort fishing and possibly sockeye will come back to the creek" (A.R. McDonnell.)

March 3rd, 1937

Re; Fishways – Smithers area

" Up to the present we have had one fishway installed at Moricetown falls on the Bulkley River, which consisted of blasting the solid rocks into a series of steps. Springs, coho, sockeye, steelhead, dolly varden, cutthroats, whitefish and eels pass through the falls." (A.R. McDonnell.)

August 12th, 1932

"In the Bulkley there is only an odd Pink but there has been quite a little run of cohoes and out of the 180 fish caught by one man there were 50 cohoes. At Moricetown the run has not been very ? for a few days. Springs, sockeye and a few cohoes are in the catch. I am able to give some figures on the catch at Hagwilget in 1931 in comparison with the catch in 1932.

	1931		1932	
	Sockeye	Springs	Sockeye	Springs
July 9th	96	36	44	44
July 11th	65	46	152	83
July 14th	332	30	343	101
July 16th	240	67	230	21
July 21st	500	2	563	5
July 22nd	458	-	670	20
July 23rd	450	13	516	9

If the escape has been the average of other years the run on the Bulkley should be the equal or better than last year which was the best in four years."
(A.R. McDonnell to James Boyd.)

December 20th, 1937

. .. Inspector McDonell states that the Upper Bulkley river above the junction of the Morice River received a heavy seeding of sockeye this year, while in 1933 the seeding was only medium. . . . It is just possible that such lakes as Bulkley Lake and Maxim Lake might be good spawning grounds for sockeye and probably do receive a fair number and if so, this might be an area of more value than is usually presumed. (A. Mackie to J. Boyd)

January 4th, 1938

"Steelhead fairly plentiful, Springs a light run, sockeye light run with cohoe sometimes fairly heavy. It is fairly hard to estimate as you get a few all the way up to Maxim Lake, the Sockeye seldom go by Bulkley Falls which lie in between Forestdale and Topley a distance of eight or ten miles from Bulkley Lake. . . . I understand that sockeye went into Maxim Creek this season but I have made a number of trips on this stream and have never seen any of it. (A.R. McDonell to James Boyd).

December 1st, 1934

"For 1934 the catch was 2,451 sockeye: . . .. I may mention . . . Game Warden Muirhead . . . informed me that there was a big run of both Springs and Sockeye on the Morice River Area. He was on the area at the right time having traveled up the Morice in a gas boat. From this it may be adduced that the stage of water at Moricetown had a very great deal to do with the catch of both Springs and Sockeye this season . . ." (A.R. McDonell to James Boyd).

November 21, 1934

. . . ."I also noticed the sockeye run came much earlier this year. The Indians were catching Sockeye when I went down to Moricetown to go to work on July11th. The main run of sockeye last year did not start until August 6th. This year there was a fair run from the first day I got there and it continued until around the 12th of August before it started to drop off. (James Hogg to J. Boyd?)

Upper Bulkley River Survey, 1956

Maxan

Lakelse – (Williams, Scully, Sockeye)

October 30th, 1928

"On September 28th, I visited Lakelse Lake and met Mr. Hearne the superintendent at the Dominion Hatchery. Lakelse Lake is the first important sockeye spawning area and the earliest of the Skeena watershed. . . .

There are four sockeye creeks on Lakelse Lake, namely, Williams; Schullabuchan: Granite and Hot Springs. I . . did visit William Creek, as the sockeye were still running there. Heavy rains had discoloured the water and swollen the creek considerably, so that other than an occasional sockeye breaking water, it was impossible to determine the

extent of the run. Fences and pens for spawning purposes were erected at Williams Creek on July 22nd. Spawning commenced on August 4th, but the pens and fences were washed out on August 9th, allowing between three and four thousand sockeye to pass through.
. . . The run to Granite and Hot Springs Creeks this year was only fair but the run to Schullabuchan was good. Sockeye were first noticed in the lake on June 14th, which is about the usual time. . . . In summing up the Lakelse spawning area as regards the sockeye, I may say that the run this year was disappointing, not being as good as previous years. The run of pinks however was well up to former good years, Lakelse River in particular, being one teeming mass of this variety."
(Robert Gibson to J.B. Babcock)

October 30, 1931

"…Artificial spawning commenced on August 3rd, and by August 17th, the full complement of sockeye eggs, approximately eight million, were collected for the hatchery. Almost six million were taken from Williams Creek, the remainder from Schullabuchan Creek. Granite, Hot Springs, Salmon and Eliza are the other sockeye creeks running into Lakelse Lake, but these were not interfered with by the hatchery crew. … The sockeye on the whole, were of a fair average in size, and there was scarcely a net-scarred fish to be seen. The males would be slightly in excess of the females in number. On inspecting the creeks I found a splendid showing of the two main sockeye creeks on Lakelse. . . . In summing up the Lakelse spawning area, I would say that this area will be well seeded this year and will equal that of 1930 when conditions on the spawning grounds was the best on record." (Robert Gibson to J.P. Babcock)

January 30, 1932

Re; beaver dam in Eliza Creek, a tributary of Lakelse Lake:

"Inspector Strachan informs me that there is a good spawning ground just beyond the dam and that in his opinion it would be in the interests of conservation to remove same to allow sockeye to utilize the grounds they cannot reach. From the information given the removal of this dam would be inexpensive probably only the cost of one box of powder" (J. Boyd).

March 18, 1932

Re; Above beaver dam:

"This beaver dam is situated on Sockeye Creek about 150 yds upstream from the junction of Williams Creek. Sockeye Creek at the point where the dam crosses is 60 feet wide, Williams Creek is the main stream and is a glacial stream which the Sockeye salmon do not follow. Sockeye Creek is a tributary of Williams Creek leading off from Williams

Creek about 2.5 miles from Lakelse Lake and follows bottom land to some small lakes at its headwaters. Ian informed that salmon come up Williams Creek to the junction of Sockeye Creek and then follow Sockeye Creek as far as they can to spawn.
The beaver dam in question is about four feet high on the lower side and is without a doubt an obstruction to the salmon. . . . .Informed that the number of fish going up Sockeye Creek very small. . ."(Van Dyk, Game Warden)

April 18, 1932

". . . appears that whole of Eliza Creek will become inaccessible to the spawning salmon if the beavers are permitted to take complete control of the stream. Owing to the fact that no sockeye egg planting was carried out in 1928 in the upper waters of Eliza Creek, I am of the opinion that the dam may not prove to be as serious a menace to the parent fish this year."

September 9th, 1932

" . . .On the afternoon of the 31st, we traversed the banks of the Morice River for a distance of approximately 5 miles from where it leaves the lake, and although the water is glacial and highly discoloured, it was evident that a fair number of both sockeye and spring salmon were in the river, as we could see the fish finning in the shallower portions. This river is approximately 100 yards in width, and has about three times the volume as the Babine River. The bottom of the 4 miles inspected consists of small gravel, and is an ideal spawning ground. . . . the 5 miles from the lake down is the main spawning ground, there are considerable stretches of gravel in different portions of the river before it joins the Bulkley, these portions being frequented by cohoe, springs and also sockeye to some extent, and the writer would consider that the spawning beds contained in this area are productive of large quantities of these varieties."

(J. Boyd to J.A Motherwell)

September 23rd, 1932

"Sir: -

On the trip to the spawning grounds of McDonnell Lake and Zymoetz River I fofund a few dead chums as my foregoing report will show. The sockeye were quite plentiful in the creek between McDonnell and Denis Lakes. If I could have counted all the fish in the creek there must have been well over 2,000, which I believe is a fairly good run."
(Craig Millar to James Boyd.)

September 26th, 1932

Dear Sir: -

" . . . There is no doubt in my mind but that a very good escapement occurred during the sockeye run which is indicated by the increase over 1928 on the spawning beds of both Lakelse and Kitsumgallum Lakes. Inspector Strachan has just returned from the areas mentioned and states that the sockeye escapement to Lakelse is thirty percent above that of 1928. He reports the escapement to the Kitsumgallum spawning grounds as good, and the settlers living in that locality state they have seen more sockeye on the spawning beds this year than ever before.

During the sockeye run the Indians catching fish for their own use at Hagwilget Canyon and Moricetown had no difficulty in securing their supply of salmon and this condition would indicate that a very satisfactory run has gone into the Morice Lake Area."
(J. Boyd to J.A. Motherwell)

January 12th, 1933

Citing a letter by C.T. Hearn.

"I regret to report that the spawning grounds in the Lakelse Lake district suffered to such an extent during the exceptionally severe freshet of November the 18th last that little or no returns from natural seeding can reasonably be expected.

All the main tributaries of Lakelse Lake frequented by sockeye salmon have been badly scoured and spawning areas heavily silted. Granite Creek, in which large numbers of fish spawned this past season, changed its course at the time of the freshet, leaving the grounds which were heavily seeded now high and dry."
(A. Mackie to J. Boyd).

September 27th, 1933

Report on Lakelse Spawning Area - 1933

September 1

Williams Creek

"On September 1st I inspected Williams Creek for a distance of eight miles up to the Bridge. There are good spawning grounds up to that distance.

The run of sockeye salmon to Williams Creek this year was fair, but the seeding very light. This is probably accounted for by the Hatchery getting the most of their eggs from this creek.

September 2nd

Schulabuchan Creek

This stream was inspected for a distance of six miles. The seeding of sockeye was very light.

September 4th

Salmon Creek

This is a small sockeye salmon stream with approximately half a mile of spawning beds. A very light seeding took place here.

Granite Creek

This stream was inspected for a distance of two miles. Seeding was also very light in this stream, similar to 1928 and much lighter than the good returns indicated in 1929.

(W. Strachan to J. Boyd)

January 3rd, 1934

" . . . Superintendent Hearn, Skeena River Hatchery, believes that extensive damage has been done to the natural seeding in the creeks in the Lakelse Lake district and that any returns of sockeye for the year 1937 will be entirely from the returns covering the quantity of eggs secured this year for the Skeena River Hatchery."
(J. Boyd to J.A. Motherwell).

August 28th, 1934

Re: Inspection of Lakelse Lake Watershed

August 17th Granite Creek – Sockeye

"The run of sockeye salmon to Granite Creek was good, and was even better than the cycle year of 1930.

Approximately 2,000 sockeye were observed in this stream the males outnumbering the females three to one. Water conditions were low in this stream, no obstructions were observed. The natural seeding was good. A collection of 987,000 sockeye eggs were taken from Granite Creek for hatchery purposes."

August 17th Salmon Creek – Sockeye

"The spawning beds of Salmon Creek are small, approximately half a mile long, and approximately 250 fish were on the spawning grounds, the males outnumbering the females, about three to one. The water in the stream was low, and no obstructions were observed. The hatchery collected 212,500 sockeye eggs from this stream."

August 18th Sculabuchan Creek – Sockeye

"The run of sockeye salmon to Sculabuchan Creek was not quite so good as the cycle year of 1930. The spawning beds were inspected for about four miles, approximately 500 sockeye salmon were observed, the males being about three to one female. The water was low in this creek, several sockeye salmon were seen on the banks which had been taken out by bears.

A collection of 400,000 eggs were taken from this stream by the Hatchery."

August 20th Williams Creek – Sockeye

"The run of sockeye salmon to Williams Creek was very good, and showed a big improvement over the cycle year of 1930. This stream was inspected for a distance of five miles and approximately five thousand sockeye salmon were observed. The males being three to one female. The water was low, and no obstructions were observed.

A collection of 5,625,000 sockeye eggs were collected from this stream by the Hatchery.

Schools of sockeye salmon were observed in the Lake outside Granite Creek, Salmon Creek, Sculabuchan and Williams Creek. All the above mentioned creeks show an improvement over the cycle year, with the exception of Schulabuchan Creek. More sockeye salmon were seen in this watershed than in any previous inspections. I would say that the natural seeding of sockeye to Lakelse Lake was very good."
(W. Strachan to J. Boyd)

December 3rd, 1935

Spawning Grounds, Lakelse Lake District

"Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 28th of October in connection with the recent heavy rainfall in the Lakelse Lake District and the consequent damage to the spawning area, I herewith beg to submit the following report.

Taking into account the extensive egg planting programme which was carried out in all of the main sockeye spawning grounds tributary to Lakelse Lake, . .. I regret to report that in all these tributaries the visible loss was practically 100%, it being estimated from actual count that during the whole of the planting operations not more than twenty live eggs were encountered, whereas smothered eggs by the thousands were displaced.

. . . it was gratifying however to find on examination of a large number of the nests of the 566,100 sockeye eggs planted in Eliza and Salmon Creeks prior to the freshet of 24th – 27th October, were almost 100% perfect, … it would now appear that any returns in the cycle year to Lakelse Lake District will solely be dependent on the hatchery output of approximately 7,374,000 eyed eggs which were planted in excellent condition in the tributaries in which the natural spawn was so seriously affected . . .”

(C.T. Hearn to J.A. Motherwell)

July 13th, 1936

Williams Creek

“Williams creek was inspected for a distance of four miles. .no obstructions for salmon to pass up to the spawning grounds. By the number of sockeye jumping at the mouth of the stream there appears to be a good escapement. None were observed on the spawning grounds.”
(W. Strachan to J. Boyd)

July 14th, 1936

Schulabuchan Creek

“This stream was inspected for a distance of three miles, no obstructions that would impede salmon going up to the spawning grounds were observed. . .. Numerous sockeye were observed jumping at the mouth of this stream.”

Granite Creek

“Granite Creek was inspected for a distance of three miles, no obstructions were observed. Although there are numerous log jams there is nothing to stop salmon going up to spawning grounds.”

(W. Strachan to J. Boyd)

November 19th, 1936

Lakelse Lake Watershed

<u>Sockeye</u> <u>Salmon Creek</u>

“This salmon stream was inspected on September 9th, for a distance of two miles. A very heavy run of sockeye were observed on the beds of this stream, the sockeyes were of a mixed variety, males outnumbering the females by about two to one, apparently little had

been done in the way of damage by the fall freshets of 1935 or the spring freshets of 1936 to the spawning beds of this stream. The seeding of sockeye salmon to this stream is very much better than the cycle year of 1932 and better than any observed on any previous inspection."

Sockeye Granite Creek

"The above salmon stream was inspected for a distance of three miles on Sept. 9th. This salmon stream is very well seeded with sockeye salmon. The sockeye were of a mixed class and the males being in the majority. The seeding of sockeye salmon in this stream is better than the cycle year of 1932, and better than 1930. No doubt some damage had been done to the spawning beds of this stream by the heavy freshets of 1935 as this stream had changed its course in places."

Sockeye Schulabuchan Creek

"On Sept. 10th this salmon stream was inspected for a distance of three miles, a large run of sockeyes were observed on the spawning beds, males outnumbering the females by two to one. The seeding of sockeye salmon in this stream is much better than the cycle year of 1932."

Sockeye William Creek

"A very large run of sockeye salmon was observed on the spawning beds of this stream when this inspection was carried out on Sept. 11th, they were a mixed class some being very small, the males were in the majority about two to one. The seeding of sockeye salmon is much better than the cycle year of 1932 or 1930. No doubt damage had been don to the spawning beds of this stream as some of the bars had been badly scoured and the stream had changed its course in several places.
Dead sockeye eggs were observed in most of the streams but were probably caused by bears killing some of the sockeyes.

The seeding of sockeye salmon to Lakelse Lake area was very good."

(W. Strachan to J. Boyd)

August 7th, 1936

"You will remember that during the fall of 1932 the sockeye spawning grounds of the Lakelse area suffered from severe freshets and the Hatchery Superintendent reported at that time that little or no returns might be expected from natural seeding that year. All main tributary streams of Lakelse Lake were badly scoured and spawning areas heavily silted. Granite Creek changed its course leaving grounds heavily seeded high and dry."
(A. Mackie to J. Boyd)

December 4th, 1936

". . .spawning areas adjacent to Lakelse Lake and note that in the case of Granite Creek, the opinion of the inspector is that some damage might have been done by the freshets of 1935 and also that damage had been done to the spawning beds of Williams Creek, but that in the other areas little if any damage had been done." (A. Mackie to J.A. Motherwell.)

September 4th, 1937

"Dear Sir:

I beg to advise you that the run of sockeye salmon to Lakelse Lake, compares favourably with the cycle years of 1930-31."

Williams Creek – "Williams creek was inspected for a distance of 8 miles, from the bridge to the lake. No sockeye were observed until we were three miles from the bridge. A fairly good natural seeding tool place."

Schulabuchan Creek – "This stream was inspected for a distance of 1.5 miles approximately 1,000 sockeye were observed. The spawning beds in this stream are not very extensive and would consider that a good natural seeding had taken place." (W.Strachan to J. Boyd.)

August 19, 1928

Re; Lakelse River

"Application of E.D. Judson Ltd. For clearing the Lakelse River for purpose of booming or rafting logs. Here would appear to be no objection from a fishery standpoint to the granting of this application, in fact, on the contrary, the clearing of log jams on this river would facilitate considerably the access of fish to their spawning grounds. It is presumed however the driving of logs down the river would not be undertaken during the period that sockeye and pikes frequent the stream." (C.T. Hearn).

March 30th, 1936

". . . In the Lakelse Lake area there is certainly no obstruction and it will be remembered that the local officers reported last season as being one of the heaviest natural seedings in recent years." (J.A.Motherwell).

Re; Lakelse Lake Inspection – 1936

July 13, 1936

Williams Creek
"Inspected for a distance of four miles. Although numerous log jams are in the stream, there are certainly no obstructions for salmon to pass up to the spawning grounds. From the number of sockeye jumping at the mouth of the stream, there appears to be a good escapement. No sockeye were observed on the spawning grounds."

July 14, 1936

Schulabachan Creek

"Inspected for a distance of three miles. No obstruction that would impede salmon from ascending the spawning grounds were observed, although there are log jams in the stream. I would say that these jams are some protection to the salmon as bears could not get at them so easily. Numerous sockeye were observed jumping at the mouth of this stream."

July 14, 1936

Granite Creek

"Inspected for a distance of three miles. No obstructions were observed although there are numerous log jams. These jams to not stop the ascent of the salmon. Salmon are also observed off this stream in large numbers." (M?. Strachan).

Kitwanga and Kitwancool

July 27th, 1932

". . .Kitwancool had sockeye on the 20th., but the visibility was very poor and I cannot give you what I would consider as satisfactory information on it."
(A.R. McDonell to James Boyd)

September 3, 1934

"The first two years I was employed by the fishery department 1931-32, those people had a barricade across the river at the upper end of the Village at a point where a bridge crosses the stream and I was informed they took their supply and allowed the rest to escape to the spawning area which is about six miles up the river to Kitwancool Lake." (R.J. Allen to J. Boyd).