

Dr. Wayne Suttles
2410 N.E. 48th Street
Portland, Oregon
U.S.A. 97213

November 27, 1984

Davis & Company
Barristers & Solicitors,
2800 Park Place,
666 Burrard Street,
VANCOUVER, B.C.
V6C 2Z7

Dear Sirs:

Re: Regina v. Ronald Sparrow

I understand that your firm has been retained to defend Mr. Ronald Sparrow, Jr., a member of the Musqueam Band, against a charge under the Fisheries Act alleging that he fished with an over-length net contrary to the conditions of the Band's Food Fishing Licence. I understand that the defence to the charge will be based on aboriginal fishing rights and, in that connection, you have requested that I provide you with a report setting out the anthropological evidence relevant to the aboriginal society of which Mr. Sparrow is a descendant, in particular with respect to the aboriginal fishery of that society.

hunting activities, required minimally two persons, the fisherman or hunter himself and his "captain" to manage the canoe. Operating a trawl net suspended between two canoes must have required minimally four persons. The building and maintaining of a trap, as indicated above, required a large number of hands.

Some features of the exchange system have been indicated above. Food was simply shared around within the family. The families within a house and the households within a village engaged in reciprocity. Families in different villages, through ties of marriage and kinship, engaged in exchanges of food and wealth and exchange of access to each others' resources. However, it is important to note that this was not a market system. There was no all-purpose money. It was not possible to take a surplus of food and simply peddle it. One had to have the social relations that made exchanges possible. The economy was therefore firmly embedded in the social network.

The importance of this social network can hardly be exaggerated. The Coast Salish region was (and is) one of great variation in the kinds of resources available and the times when and the places where they are (or were) available. Foods present in one part of the region are absent in another. Some foods, such as salmon, fluctuate enormously in abundance from season to season and even from