

# Cohan Commission

The decline of the Fraser River sockeye is a human and political issue not a natural one. The Federal Government has created a division amongst Indigenous Nations along the Fraser River, which has created the breakdown of traditional fishing laws which is what maintained a healthy food fishery since time immemorial. The Indigenous Food Fishery has always been a collective responsibility. Leaders, technicians, Indigenous Peoples and the Federal Government need to connect Indigenous Laws, with today's Science to once again create a healthy fishery.

- Companies are in control of the fish agenda. Governments are not because they are dependent on corporate, cash, jobs and taxes.
- Environmental issues are being ignored by the Federal Government. The attempted creation of an acid resistant fish by the Government is a tribute to this statement. Instead of facing environmental issues the Government is trying to use science in an attempt to get around environmental problems. Corporations wholeheartedly support this agenda.
- The relationship between science and the Indigenous spiritual customs with respect to fish are nonexistent.
- The recognition and creation of First Nations that are simply Indian reservations under the Federal Government

is another process of creating unhealthy relationships which impact the fishery.

- Denial is a big one. The Government refuses to acknowledge that fish hatcheries contribute to the decline of the fishery. Governments say there needs to be scientific proof. Science has been with the Government for a long time yet the fish continue to decline. Science standing alone is a major part of the problem.
- The ignoring of Traditional Indigenous Nations as the rightful source of collective fish knowledge is contributing to the decline of the fishery.
- Entering into individual Treaties with Indian Bands will not be manageable thus impacting and contributing to the continued decline of the fishery.
- Inquiry after Inquiry after Inquiry yet the fish continue to decline. No meaningful follow up.
- Climate change is twofold. One created by humanity and one created by the natural process of creation. Having no balance between the two at the time of the great cyclical changes is a recipe for chaos and disaster. The declining fishery is an indication of our situation. Not Good!!!

In closing a healthy food fishery will be found in the development of a new relationship between Indigenous

Nations and Canada. An unhealthy fishery is between Indian Band First Nations and Canada.

This is where Canada has been since the creation of Indian Reservations, causing the steady decline of the Fraser River Fishery. It is the Indigenous Nations along the Fraser River who have the collective responsibility for the rivers and fish; it is the Indigenous Nation communities that have the responsibility of taking care of their fishing stations. Until this relationship is corrected the fish will continue to decline. As long as Canada supports the unnatural process of fish hatcheries the fish will become extinct. It begs the point of having Inquiries. We have been going down a chaotic path for some time now; this is the marker not another Inquiry. The answer is obvious you do not need an Inquiry to arrive at an answer, the fish are already letting us know, that a new relationship is needed.

With Respect

Kūkwpi7 Mike Leach

St'at'imc Chiefs Council Chair