

THE CAMPBELL RIVER AND AREA

# MIRROR

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## RIDING THE TIGER

An issue which has slumbered for months has risen from the depths of public controversy - apathy this week with the announcement of a study which is to be conducted as regards attitudes towards the dredging of the Oyster River.

The study is being done to find out how people feel about commercial development at the mouth of the Oyster River.

So this is an appeal. For once we should all say how we feel about an environment issue right here in our own backyards. It should be said soon, not when it is too late and all the damage has been done.

Because it is damage that could last for decades and damage that could kill for years and damage which all of us may in time feel.

This has something of an alarmist tone about it, and is exaggerated somewhat bearing in mind that only one river estuary is at stake.

However, if we let too many more similar projects through there could be disastrous environmental repercussions all over the globe. On the whole man has a most unnatural attitude towards nature.

He is the only animal who destroys, not just kills, without reason. That is unnatural.

Too often these actions are defended with cries of "progress" or "look at all the jobs we're creating".

Absolute nonsense. This is just an easy shelter protected by the system for justifying damage which could go on years after anyone writing or reading this is long gone and whose remains are mouldering away and are at last returning some good to the earth.

One fact that holds man apart from all other animals is supposed to be that he can think. Sometimes this seems to be nonsense too. If he could think, then he could see the damage he is allowing and in turn causing.

Animals destroy no more than they have to for their survival. They even clean up after themselves.

Men destroy more than they have to for their survival. They do not clean up after themselves. Just one look around reveals that fact. Elk Falls Mill belching vapour into the atmosphere and even worse, spewing poisonous wastes into Discovery Passage points that out. Men do not clean up after themselves.

The problem of course with all kinds of industrial operations is that they are already there. What do we do about them.

They cannot be closed down because of other kinds of havoc that might be caused. They can be modified and kept within certain restrictions certainly and in some ways this is being done already.

However, that is not the primary concern. More of the same is. Man can probably deal with pollution and environmental problems that exist now, but is it within his capabilities to stop their spread.

This is a rather appropriate old Bengalese proverb from India: "He who rides a tiger can never get off."

But we are going to have to, even if it does mean looking down into the tiger's jaws.

## REFLECTIONS

### Act now save a fish estuary

Dear Sir:

May I ask a few questions of concern to the Campbell River and Oyster Bay people.

Are you patriotic? Do you stand up and sing "Oh Canada we stand on guard for thee"? If you do, do you mean it, or is it just lip service - a parroting of words without sincerity?

Canada is a beautiful country with a multitude of lakes, streams and rivers which provide not only a plentiful water supply but also give us unrivalled fishing.

The intriguing wonder of a salmon run where fish fight all obstacles to reach their spawning grounds that their species may live on.

Forests and woodlands turned into a fairyland of colours by autumns magic touch. The beauty of a dogwood tree, daisies in a meadow. Wild roses adding their beauty to this world around us.

Wildlife - the graceful deer whose spotted fawn asks only for a chance to live. Our grouse and ducks searching the swampland for food. Geese winging the pathways of the sky.

The multitude of birds, from the majestic swan to the little chickadee all add beauty and life and pleasure to our surroundings. Even the lowly porcupine waddling his cumbersome way adds a little pleasure and humour to our day.

These are only a small part of the gifts God gave us. Must we destroy them, even as we destroyed his Son?

This estuary is a rearing ground for salmon smolts. Their main food supply is plankton in all forms. What effect will a layer of mud caused by original digging or later cleaning of the Marina have on the Littoral zone, which is a rich producer of Protozoa?

This area is a public park and is also associated with the Game sanctuary on the Experimental Farm is frequented by a lot of waterfowl which feed on the Eel grass and small crustacea. Should not this area be reserved as an extension of the present game sanctuary?

Few people know that the government is seriously considering financing half of the cost of constructing the breakwater Marina complex for Pacific Playground, the amount somewhere between two and three hundred thousand dollars.

The reason given is that it will provide shelter for boats in distress. How valid is this argument as opposed to the loss of fish and wildlife when you consider we already have Air-Sea Rescue?

Could this money be put to a better use? For instance a Public boat basin behind the existing breakwater at Iron River at Oyster Bay. The Salmon Point Marina already established needs a breakwater which could be built for a fraction of the cost.

One thing we do know for sure! The rivers, streams

and lakes in this fair country of ours are gradually going, killed by a thing called progress. Either power dams, sewerage or industrial pollution are sounding their death knell.

When will we stop this destruction?

Think back in the history of man - at one stage of our development this bounty we enjoy may have been necessary for our survival. Now, with man's domination of earth the picture changes. This bounty is now in our care; we must realize this fact and act accordingly.

Every Sunday thousands of people go to Church and ask the Lord to forgive them their sins, as they forgive them that trespass against them.

Then we proceed to kill our bird and animal life with insecticides, pollute our streams and lakes, in many cases to a point that fish can no longer live or thrive in the dark putrid water. We destroy wildlife to the point of extinction, using as an excuse for our actions the magic word "Progress" - the black banner of Progress with it's Golden Dollar symbol marching ever onward to destroy our river estuaries, lakes, streams, even the waters and the whales of the oceans and the wildlife of our land all for personal gain.

How long are we as Christians going to allow this destruction? Where will it stop? Is Progress a wolf in sheep's clothing? If so, let us trade it for a dog that will obey our commands, so that our advancement may be

controlled and governed for the benefit of society and the land we live in.

On February 8 in Campbell River a representative of the Land Branch Service, Dr. Le Baron will hold a discussion on the social impact of the proposed Oyster River estuary development.

Should we allow private enterprise to dig it up or not? That is the question.

Come to the meeting and voice your opinion. Tomorrow, next week, next year may be too late to save a fish estuary, to wish you'd acted sooner, been a little less apathetic. Now is the time to act. Attend the meeting at Room 237, Tower Section, Discovery Inn, Campbell River, February 8, 1975.

A. E. Clayton  
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Campbell River.

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