

## B.C. Experts Discuss Possible Effects

# Dams and Wildlife

Provincial fish and game branch officials say the proposed Jordan River dam will probably have few adverse effects on wildlife, compared to the Peace River project.

The three experts: Dr. Clifford Carl, provincial museum director, fish and game branch assistant director Don Robinson and fisheries management chief Ed Vernon, all agreed drowning of animals was the least of problems facing wildlife.

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Mr. Vernon said the Jordan River project would necessitate surveys before any accurate predictions could be made.

He said that because the area is used by sportsmen, the debris created in the manufactured lake would have to be cleared.

However, referring to the Peace River project which has been gathering water behind the dam since late spring, the three men's opinions differed.

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Dr. Carl was first to comment on the effects of the Peace project.

"If you include all the bugs, critters and crawlers, then of course there will be some drowning — quite a lot, in fact," he said.

He was later supported by the others in claiming the

larger animals would just move out as the water level rose.

"What is interesting is the effect on the whole ecology of the country," he added.

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He said the environment would change as water plants began to grow in the area, which would lead to a change in the species of animals frequenting the area.

Dependent upon rain and snow conditions, the Peace River dam will reach its full height in three to seven years.

Dr. Carl said drowning would occur when some animals seeking refuge on islands were submerged by rising waters.

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"It would have been nice if we could have had more than our preliminary survey, but we couldn't spare either the time or men," he concluded.

Mr. Robinson said one Peace area problem was the vague possibility of an exchange of species.

"This could be disastrous. You wouldn't want pike getting into a salmon river," he said.

He said pike were competi-

tive with and frequently ate salmon, and that Peace River pike could wipe out Fraser River salmon if a transfer took place.

"It captures the people's imagination," he said of drowning possibilities, and added, "of course we're going to lose some animals due to flooding.

"We're also going to lose some revenue," he added.

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He said trappers' lines on the Peace would be flooded, but British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority had compensated them for losses.

He said a crew in the Peace River area was assessing the new shoreline to reduce wildlife and revenue losses.

He agreed with Dr. Carl's prediction that ecological changes would be more drastic than drowning, and gave moose as an example.

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He said the rising waters of the Peace would make tremendous changes in their winter range areas.

He said modifications to the Fraser River drainage area had been made, to reduce transfer of fish species

between the Fraser and Peace Rivers.

Northern waterways have always faced this hazard under natural conditions, he said.

Mr. Vernon said Mr. Robinson overlooked one possibility.

"There is a slight possibility — there are pike in the Peace River reservoir area," he said.

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He said the danger was offset because the lake-dwelling pike would not live in swift flowing water.

"But if they do get into the reservoir, they will establish themselves," he added.

He said Fraser River flood control projects in the future might make the transfer possible, but the change most likely to occur would be beneficial, with downstream benefits to sport fishermen.

The cooler water flowing from the Peace dam, with its controlled flow, would be conducive to trout propagation.

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He said because of cost, debris from dead trees would not be cleared in the isolated reservoir area.

"Whatever species of fish develop there, won't be available to the angler for several years," he said, and described whitefish and kokanee (land-locked salmon) as the most likely species.



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