

## SPEC seeking freedom of information act

A provincial freedom of information act is proposed by the Scientific Pollution and Environmental Control Society in a brief to be presented Tuesday to the inquiry into pollution control objectives for the mining, mine-milling and smelting industries.

SPEC says the new act could be used by the public to get information on these industries.

SPEC also wants the B.C. government to enact legislation requiring independent environmental impact statements for industrial developments and providing the public with the right to file class action legal suits to protect the environment.

Another request by SPEC in its brief is for public funding to enable environmental groups to participate properly in inquiries and appeals involving the environment.

SPEC deplored the right of the head of the Pollution Control Branch to decide against public hearings on issues such as Penticton's sewage discharge into Skaha Lake.

"The distinct impression is left with

SPEC and others that the PCB is an obstacle instead of an ally to pollution opponents," says the brief.

SPEC points out that conservation has long been considered a cost when, in fact, it should better be considered a source of employment.

"Conservation and other housekeeping activities are also sources of employment that can play an important part in improving current economic stability and well being."

The brief was presented by SPEC B.C. and SPEC Kamloops (president Don Ells).

It included presentations from the Yellowhead Ecological Association, the Shuswap-Thompson River Research and Development Association, and Kamloops and District Garden Club.

Derek Ellis, associate professor of biology at the University of Victoria, reviewed the effects of pollution controls in B.C. by analysing four case histories.

These cases are Anaconda's Britannia

copper mine, Jordan River copper mine on Vancouver Island, Island Copper mine at Rupert Inlet, and B.C. Molybdenum at Alice Arm near Stewart.

He said three of the case histories show that before mine effluent controls were brought in, the dumping of mine wastes into the sea was "producing metal contamination of shellfish and other environmental changes now considered unacceptable."

But Ellis said the controls now used in B.C. "appear effective in preventing metal contamination at least in the sea and over the short term of two to five years of discharge."

Ellis gave examples of conflicting federal and provincial regulations and said this problem must be solved.

"Two case histories, Jordan River and Island Copper, suggest that marine environmental disturbances other than metal contamination can be reversed or naturally rehabilitated in short periods ranging from a few days to a few years," he wrote.