

Battle of words over fish

Nothing could better illustrate why we need independent research in our universities than the recent controversy between the Department of Fisheries and the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences over an article by Professors Jeff Hutchings, Carl Walters and Richard Haedrich (Fish Experts Draw Fiery Response From Ottawa — June 25).

The article dealt, among other matters, with the department's suppression of the views of scientists who disagreed with the ministerial and bureaucratic wisdom on the depletion of fish stocks.

This incident shows how important it is to ensure that the funding remains intact for independent research in the universities, and why professors need guarantees of academic freedom in their contracts so that powerful interests cannot silence them.

William Bruneau, President
Canadian Association
of University Teachers, Ottawa

The vicious personal attack by senior Department of Fisheries and Oceans mandarins on three scientific authors in the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences is a disgrace.

For 14 years in the House of Commons I fought these mandarins, and to see them malign independent scientists for publishing the truth is more than I can stand. Dr. Carl Walters, Dr. Richard Haedrich and Dr. Jeff Hutchings are marine scientists of impeccable reputation.

When an Ottawa mandarin like Scott Parsons attacks scientists of this calibre he reveals the real problem with DFO. This is a federal agency that is out of control and out of touch with reality.

How is it that not one head has rolled since the collapse of the Atlantic cod fishery? Fifty thousand men and women have been thrown out of work and not one of them a DFO cod-stock manager.

How is it possible that the DFO could approve the Kemano 2 project, have Alcan spend \$500-million and then have the project cancelled? Why didn't any heads roll at DFO?

What about B.C. salmon? Hundreds of runs of salmon are extinct or near extinction due to political wheeling and dealing by DFO mandarins.

I have great respect for the line scientists at DFO and for the scientists currently under attack.

It is the highly political mandarins at the top of DFO that deserve scrutiny.

The time has come for a judicial inquiry into the top management of DFO. Who has benefited in recent years from their decisions?

Not the fish. Not the communities that rely on fish. Not the line scientists in and outside DFO. Canadians have a right to know the truth.

Jim Fulton, Executive Director
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