



## Lesson # 3 - Sto'lo letter to the Minister of Marines and Fisheries

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1902

To the Honourable Minister of Marine and Fisheries We, the undersigned, respectfully beg to call your attention to the alarming increase of deep nets in use this season by Cannerymen and private individuals, to the great injury of us poor fishermen who can ill afford to go to the expense of buying so costly an outfit by the present unwarrantable depth of nets when in the water.

The depth of the nets we complain of, are from 70 meshes to 110 meshes, thus when in action, dragging along the river bed and giving but very little chance to those fishermen using nets of lesser depth to catch any fish, also preventing the surplus fish on their way up from reaching the spawning grounds in the interior waters.

We are all agreed, that this year's run through Yale and Lytton canyons, are the poorest for years past, which we attribute almost solely to the use of these deep nets.

We have watched the salmon run every year, carefully, and as fishermen have added to the depth of their nets, so has the run of fish lessened in the Fraser River where we Indians can carefully note how the run is.

In the early days of the fishing industry, 30 and 40 meshes only , were used and we can all with truth state, that there was just as many fish caught then as there are now with the 110 mesh net. The salmon also had a chance to pass on to the spawning grounds...

What we are anxious for the Department to do, towards all parties concerned, is to adopt a uniform depth of nets of not more than 60 meshes to be

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used in the future. This will give all as equal chance and leave a big margin of space to allow fish not gilled to pass on to the spawning beds. Unless this plan is adopted, the Salmon industry will be greatly injured in the future.

We, on a former occasion, gave the Government timely warnings as to the fate of the Sturgeon fishing and with what results we all know now to our loss and regret. The Sturgeon now have been destroyed in the Fraser.

We trust, however, that the Government will consider the matter we now complain of, and remedy the evil without delay which in times past, has caused such harm and loss to these Fisheries. Hoping you will give this matter your speedy attention...

Chief Cassimere, Langley  
Chief Johnny, Coquitlam  
Chief Joe Isaac, Katzie  
Chief Johnny, Musqueam  
Chief Augustan, Matsqui  
Chief Phidell, Whonnock  
Chief Captain Jim, Sumass  
Chief Pierre Ayessik, Hope  
Chief Harry, Squamish  
Chief Joe, Squamish  
Chief Harry, Cheam  
Chief George O'Hammon Ohamil  
Chief Johnny Leon, Chehalis  
Johnny Point  
Johnny Sparrow  
Seymour Grant  
Bob Watchman  
D. Bailey

Source: *A Stolo Coast Salish Historical Atlas*, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, 2001

## Annotations