

From The Queens County Advance. 15 February, 2011.

Land based fish farming missing the point

A great number of articles have appeared in a number of publications in the recent past on the subject of sea cage versus land based Fish Farming. The companies argue that the practice is safe and the experts outline all of the negative effects ie: disease, parasites, and escape-ment risks. The one missing equation to the argument is the government's responsibility to "wild" Atlantic salmon.

The problem with government is that, they have turned over the control of the Aquaculture Industry to the keepers of the wild stocks. Federally, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

is both the promoter and regulator and provincially, Fisheries and Aquaculture is the promoter and regulator. The most recent DFO budget was 80 per cent aquaculture and 20 per cent wild stocks. Seems that the Federal Government and DFO have it upside down.

Provincially, despite doing a good job replenishing trout stocks, Inland Fisheries spends too much time, energy and money on the aquaculture industry. The most recent proposal by Cooke Aquaculture of New Brunswick to have two more sea cages in Shelburne Harbour is a good example. The "carrot" being if the Dexter Government allows the open cages they "promise" to build a

fish processing plant in Shelburne. The Minister of Fisheries just happens to be the MLA for Shelburne.

Instead of accepting this, bribe appearing proposal, Inland Fisheries and the Government should advise Cooke Aquaculture to build two closed containment systems, on land, adjacent to the proposed fish processing plant. This would be a responsible position for both the government and industry. Otherwise, we continue to make the same mistakes that other countries have corrected.

*Darrell Tingley
President, Medway River Salmon
Association*