

B.C. RESIDENT ACTION FOR MOUNTAIN SHEEP

R.A.M.S. NEWSLETTER

President's Message



By Barre J Eyre

"The BC Sportsman has a terrible tendency to cut his own throat."

These words, echoed by two Fish and Wildlife officials,

sheep harvested proved negligible. Unfortunately, illness prevented RAMS delegates from attending the convention and relating the facts.

It is imperative therefore, that the province's 100,000 hunters get informed, organized and activated. The Guide Outfitters are indeed getting to the politicians, and to certain Branch officials. What Have You Done?

Remember, too, RAMS also shares your concerns for other problems such as habitat loss. Members in the Kootenays expressed anxiety over the plight of the Sighlers. We fully sympathize. With continued support from a concerned public, this organization will fight to ensure sound, long-term management of fish, wildlife, and outdoor recreational resources in the best interests of all residents of B.C.

There are several RAMS members in centers like Kamloops, Cranbrook, Vancouver and Prince George. Some clubs in these areas have also joined RAMS.

Get together! Form local RAMS chapters. Send suggestions to us. Write to your newspaper. Phone your radio station. But above all, launch your MLA's and your Fish and Wildlife officials. Force them to take a stand!

And, send copies of your protests to Opposition Conservation critic, Lester Nicholson, M.L.A.

You must act NOW. Some people have contributed a few bucks and a lot of time to this struggle. We have gambled everything on this publication and the December 2nd meeting with the Minister. (I feel 'shameful' to say, we're now broke!) Obviously only strong public outrage will put certain officials into putting the rights of the BC taxpayer and the future of our wildlife, ahead of foreign self-interest.

PLEASE HELP! Don't play dead until you have to.



accurately sum up the disastrous present set of the BCWF convention in Williams Lake. Well intentioned but uninformed members voted to restrict by 50 per cent the sheep hunting privileges of BC sportsmen in an area where resident impact on

This 'one tag in five years' policy was the most critical setback in RAMS' campaign; it was even more damaging than the Muncho sell-out. Being 'gun-shot' by the branch was easier to stomach than was the Convention's collective suicide.

Residents contribute twice as much to economy as aliens

During the past year the resident sheep hunters of this province have been the object of a serious attack by the Northern B.C. Guides Association. The "Northern" has circulated a large number of letters to the editor throughout the province. The gist of this campaign is to convince the politicians that the numbers of resident sheep hunters must be reduced in favour of the non-resident. To quote from a recently circulated letter by the Northern: "The resident must be the object of restrictive legislation by the government."

There repeated argument is that the non-resident hunter is supporting the resident hunter. In short, they contend that the resident hunts for little or nothing. "NOT TRUE." Consider the following facts taken primarily from the summary of revenue derived from the sale of various licenses, collections etc. Fish & Wildlife Branch, 1977 (Refer to 30th Hunting ALL SHEEP.)

Max. Min Sheep License \$70 \$25, Value \$1,875, Harvest \$45, Per of Success 13, Non-resident Min. Sheep License No. 140, Value \$4,500, Harvest \$60, Per Cent of Success 10.

Add to this the guides contention that each non-resident pays a further \$1000 to his guide. Let us assume that a more realistic figure — \$1,500. Without arguing over the large portion of this fee which goes to non-resident outdoor guides or the large percentage that goes to out of the province "advertising", let us assume all this money goes into the province economy. Residents also spend money on sheep hunting, however a resident's money does not go to equipment brought out of the province. It is spent entirely on in province expenses (fuel, guns, boots etc.) Furthermore, most resident sheep hunters are their holders for sheep hunting and so each spend their dollars in B.C. not

Hawaii or Texas. In doing so they keep their money in Province. As a considerable under estimate, let us assume that cost of gear and vacation money not otherwise taken from the province is as low as \$2,000 per hunter.

We presently harvest approximately 400 sheep in British Columbia annually. Now then keeping the above figures in mind, let us take a hypothetical situation. Suppose these 400 rams were harvested only by resident hunters. Keeping in mind the residents 13 per cent success ratio, we would allow 3075 resident sheep tags. Now let's see how much money the province would make in this situation:

Resident Hunters — 3075, License Value \$5,800, Other money (4,000 ea.) 2,500,000, Total to Economy \$2,558,700.

It can be seen that if residents do all the sheep hunting the economy of the

province is more than twice as benefited.

Of course at present there are probably not 3075 BC residents who wish to sheep hunt, and until that stage is reached, RAMS feels non-residents should be allowed to harvest the "remaining surplus" sheep after the more valuable needs of the BC residents have been assured.

RAMS expects that with a quota system the demand by non-residents will increase (all stone sheep are found in BC) and that the economy will further gain from the potential increased charges in those non-residents allowed under a quota system. Since license revenues more clearly reach the resident coffers than do fees paid to guides, RAMS would agree with any commitment moves made by the Minister of Recreation and Conservation to increase non-

resident license fees at the time of imposition of a quota.

Remember the Northern BC Guides Association wants to limit resident hunters. There can be no doubt that they have reached senior officials in the Fish & Wild Life Branch. Witness the fiasco at Muncho Lake this fall. Pressure from RAMS was instrumental in achieving a quota on sheep taken by Muncho Lake Outfitters. This was able to convince them to also put the residents on a 5 ram quota for the area. That putting the non-resident on equal footing with the resident taxpayer of B.C. This occurred after these same officials publicly stated that the policy of the branch was to manage the wildlife resources of this province let for the resident and 2nd Canadian residents and 3rd the rest of the world. They preach it but don't practice it. LET'S DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

Alaska pipeline poses question

The recently announced decision to pipe Alaska gas through northern BC will give

the province's economy a shot in the arm. But, at the same time, it could create a real problem for the Fish and Wildlife Branch. Picture, if you will, several thousand increased workers from outside the province situated right in the middle of some of our finest game ranges. Further, picture what could happen when these men satisfy the six month residency requirement for resident hunting licence!

Hunting pressure along the pipeline could be serious, especially for isolated groups of sheep or goats. Enforcement, already a problem in the north, would be stretched to the limit.

One possible solution would be the extension of the residency requirement from six months to one year. If you have any thoughts on the subject log on about

dropping us a line at Box 6618, Port St. John, BC.

RAMS finances

BC Resident Action for Mountain Sheep is supported by concerned citizens throughout the province. Although some members are not hunters, most are sportsmen who already belong in local Rod and Gun Clubs. Members have each contributed \$10.00, and in some cases, considerably more. Major expenses include BCWF fees, paper, postage, printing, phone bills, membership cards and the upcoming meeting with the Minister. A receipt and membership card will be mailed to all persons supporting RAMS.

Residents face incredible injustice

Considerable controversy has flourished as to the hunting of timber sheep in northern British Columbia. This group RAMS has maintained that since non-residents accompanied by guides kill most of the sheep (50 percent in management units 22 and 23 in 1975), restrictions in the form of a quota must be placed on non-resident hunting.

In a series of letters to the province's media, the Northern B.C. Guides Association contended that since more B.C. residents hold firearms licenses than do aliens, "the resident must be the object of restrictive legislation." Because the number of firearms licenses bears no relation to numbers of sheep licenses, and as residents harvest only 14 per cent of the sheep, the Guides' argument is of course fallacious!

The problem is, however, serious and all parties are agreed that the harvest must be reduced. It is surely a fair assumption then, that the Fish and Wildlife Branch will not delay another year in imposing restrictions. But, three related factors are operating against the legitimate demands of the B.C. resident hunter.

- 1) The resident sheep hunter is not adequately organized. (For example, at the 1977 B.C. Wildlife Federation meeting, well intentioned but insufficiently informed, individuals suggested numbers of resident sheep hunters be cut by 50 percent through a "once in five years" license.)
- 2) The Guides through their political arm — the Northern B.C. Guides Association — are in frequent contact with our MLAs, pushing their bogus arguments to retain a near monopoly of the harvest.
- 3) A precedent was set in 1977 in the Muncho Lake area where over-harvest had been intense due to high kill by non-residents. There, the guide was finally put on a quota, but the resident hunter was virtually excluded through the imposition of limited entry hunting. RAMS predicts that the 1977 statistics will show nearly 100 percent of the sheep at Muncho Lake being killed by non-residents.

It is the limited entry system, or its variant, the one to only several years license, which the guides will attempt to shove down our throats for 1978 and beyond.

RAMS is not opposed to limited entry hunting in situations where resident over-harvest has the potential to occur. This situation applies to the Adirista and Snake Creek Sighlers. In these cases the shortening of the season cannot effectively reduce the kill by resident hunters (there is no non-resident hunting), so it is either an open season at all, or limited entry. However, to apply this system to the north where the bulk of the kill goes to non-residents would be an incredible injustice. Remember, THE WILDLIFE RESOURCES BELONG BY LAW TO THE PEOPLE OF B.C. Remember too, that under limited entry you won't know from one year to the next (or even a month before the season) whether you will be able to hunt sheep, where you will be able to hunt, or with whom you will be able to hunt.

Contact the Minister and your MLA today and let them know you want to save the province's sheep, that you feel the non-resident is the obvious group to be restricted, and that you oppose imposition of limited entry to resident hunters.

Ask for a reply.

Rams Members in Lower Mainland

MEET RAMS EXECUTIVE

BARRE EYRE AND RICH PETERSON WILL BE AT THE SHERRATON HOTEL SAT. DEC. 3 AFTER 2:00 PM
PLEASE DROP IN, OR PHONE, TO DISCUSS OUTCOME OF MEETING WITH REC. COO. MINISTER SAM RAWLF