

JULY 14, 1947

SEATTLE LIGHT CONTRIBUTES TO HATCHERY COST

Milo Moore, state director of fisheries, today received a \$54,950 check from Seattle City Comptroller W. C. Thomas to assist in financing construction of the state fish hatchery at Marblemount.

The sum is in compensation for damage to eggs and small fish in the river above Marblemount due to the operation of the Seattle City Light department dams.

Spawning Unaffected

City Light dams in the Skagit gorge do not interfere with spawning runs, officials say, as fish were never able to get up through the gorge before the dams were built. The gorge contained seven miles of white water, almost a continuous fall. It has been established, however, that operation of the dams caused damage to eggs and small fish in the river above Marblemount. This was verified for the city of Seattle by Trevor Kincaid, until recently a professor at the University of Washington.

City Light's contribution will pay for the construction of seven rearing ponds and related water supply, and provide operating funds for nine years.

Completed In Fall

Twenty ponds are under construction and will be completed this fall. Twenty more will be built as soon as additional funds are available, making a total of 40 ponds.

Approximately three million silver and chinook salmon and steelhead per year will be put into the Skagit river watershed by the new hatchery, Moore said.

The number of fish planted will later be increased to six million per year.

On Clark Creek

Construction of the Skagit hatchery is being financed by the State Department of Fisheries and the grant from Seattle City Light. The hatchery is located on Clark creek, a tributary of the Cascade river, which empties into the Skagit below Marblemount.

Buildings on the site include a hatchery, superintendent's residence and caretaker's building. The hatchery has a capacity of 6,000,000 eggs.

"This station is the outstanding installation of its kind in the state of Washington," Moore said. "It is

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Seattle Light

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a big step forward in our long range plan for building up Puget Sound salmon and steelhead runs.

"City Light by its spirit of co-operation has demonstrated fine leadership in community planning. Through their understanding of the problems of conservation an important step has been taken for protecting the Skagit fisheries for future generations.

"If all organizations engaged in developing our water resources will

cooperate as fully, the maintenance of our principal tourist attraction will be greatly simplified."

The new hatchery will be directed by Superintendent Ernest Fisher, who has previously been in charge of the Soos Creek and Willapa hatcheries. Fisher will be assisted by a foreman who will live on the site, and other help to be hired locally.

Fisher expects to start taking eggs this August or September. After the eggs are hatched 150,000 fry will be placed in each pond. When the fry reach the length of three inches, 110,000 of them — less mor-

talities — will be released in the streams. The remaining 40,000 will be pond raised to 6 or 7 inches before being released.

Eighteen ponds will be used for salmon and two ponds for steelheads. The steelhead will be distributed in various Skagit watershed streams by state game department men under Don W. Clark, director of game.

Results of the operation should be evident in from three to five years, Moore said. The run will continue to build up by increased natural spawning aided by continuous hatchery operation.