From the Desk of Steve Chantrell

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POISONS BEING DUMPED IN CLYDE —SAYS REPORT

By ALASTAIR CAMPSIE

A TON of poisons which contaminate fish is being dumped in the Firth of Clyde by Glasgow Corporation every year.

This startling disclosure follows last month's mercury scare, which led to a ban in sales of tuna fish by some stores.

The Clyde poisons are called PCBs, and are transported by corporation sludge boat to an area six miles south of Garroch Head, on the isle of Bute, where they are dropped into deep water.

These toxins—full name: polychlorinated biphenyls—are regarded by experts as being harder to break down in the sea than DDT, the powerful insecticide which has now been internationally banned.

After an all-Scotland survey the highest levels of PCB's were found near the Tail of the Bank, despite claims that Glasgow has the safest waste disposal system in the country.

The investigation has been carried out by Dr. Alan Holden, chief chemist at the Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory, Pitlochry.

Said Dr. Holden yesterday: "We are in contact with the manufacturer of PCBs in Britain. It is more than likely that industry will take care of this problem."

But the experts cannot find out how many factories in the Glasgow area use these chemicals, which are needed for the manufacture of plastics and electrical goods.

Dr. Holden admitted that, if fish and shellfish which had been contaminated were eaten by human beings, the chemicals could be passed on. But he said the hazard was slight.

The only manufacturer of PCBs in Britain is Monsanto Chemicals Ltd., of London. A spokesman said last night that PCBs had replaced mineral oils in transformers.

A spokesman said: "The substance can be handled safely, provided a strict standard of personal hygiene is observed.

But he added that a type of acne, which led to liver damage, could occur if people were badly exposed to the chemical. "We are withdrawing sales to applicants where it is not realistically possible to control leakage to the environment. This will come into effect on March 1."

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E.Wheeler and R.Keller discussed the presence of PCB in municipal waste disposal sludge when at Pitlochry laboratory in May 1970.
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