("Storm," continued from page 1)

tacted, declined to comment further on the causes behind the shake-up.

Dissappearing Salmon

On November 1, 1989 Salmon Enterprise Production Supervisor Royce Strong was fired by his boss, Tom Staggs. The reported cause behind Strong's firing: an in-house audit that showed several thousand pounds of missing salmon. Strong denies wrongdoing. Both Staggs and Werth have defended Strong's discharge.

And the Task Force? They set the amount of salmon "unaccounted for" at 9,327 lbs. worth $24,716.55. But the Task Force report fails to place the blame for the missing salmon, which is described generally as "samples, seniors, stolen & other losses."

Part of the fish might have been taken by unknown thieves in late May, 1989, according to the Task Force. "Nothing was done to determine any volume of loss," the report stated.

The report also said that "STEDCO staff members were given fish to take home" and that donations of smoked salmon were given to the Elder's Program. What remains a mystery is the quantity of fish handed out and the names of STEDCO staff members responsible for authorizing such gifts.

In addition to the 9,327 lbs. of salmon "unaccounted for," the Task Force report tracked another 1,700 lbs. of salmon "trashed in garbage." This "bad fish," the report stated, had its origins in an order of 6,999 lbs. of salmon supplied by an Astoria based company in late June, 1989.

Reportedly, STEDCO had experienced problems previously with the fish wholesaler, so "Royce Strong [and a production employee] went to Astoria to grade the fish" before STEDCO accepted delivery. Strong "stated that he rejected approximately 4,000 pounds" of salmon. "The salmon was one (1) year old fish at the time of purchase."

Despite the precautions, the Task Force found that "approximately 1,700 pounds" of the 6,999 lbs. purchased "had been thrown into the garbage."

What sense did the Task Force make of all this? "The Committee feels that either the inspection and grading of the split salmon on 6/27/89 was not done properly/completely -or- bad fish was substituted when shipped to STEDCO. It does not make sense for Royce to throw large amounts of salmon in the garbage that he graded and inspected and make a big issue of it."

All told, the Task Force report identified 11,027 lbs. of salmon wasted, stolen, and otherwise unaccounted for. Who was responsible for the loss? Was Strong fired for good cause? Was he made the fall guy? The Task Force report left those questions unanswered.

Bad Blood

Although the events behind Strong's firing are still clouded in mystery, the result of his firing is clear: a flood of distrust and allegations of wrongdoing directed at STEDCO.

At the Tribe's General Council meeting held on Nov. 4, 1989, STEDCO managers faced stiff questioning by members of the General and Tribal Council. Central to these complaints were charges that STEDCO was squandering timber revenue money and that STEDCO was not accountable to tribal members. Although Strong's name was not mentioned, the hiring/firing procedures at STEDCO also faced criticism.

Ted Werth, in answer to the complaints about STEDCO's financial losses, conceded that the Salmon and Bingo enterprises were showing losses. Werth asked for patience, saying that any new business needs time to start making money.

Werth and Evergreen Supervisor Frank Rilatos both reported that one new STEDCO enterprise—the Evergreen Enterprise—was showing a profit. After more questioning, however, Werth said that without a $75,000 grant from the B.I.A., the Evergreen Enterprise would have shown a loss for the year.

Both Werth and Tom Staggs said that STEDCO policy had been followed in all personnel matters, including the firing of Royce Strong.

Outside of public forums, the tide of rumors of misconduct and mismanagement at STEDCO continued to grow. By the meeting scheduled for Nov. 18th, members of Tribal Council had heard enough to compile a relatively long list of concerns about STEDCO. Council spent hours deliberating in executive session.

Once back in open session, Tribal Council voted to form a Task Force. Its mission, according to an intra-tribal memo signed by Tribal Council Chair Delores