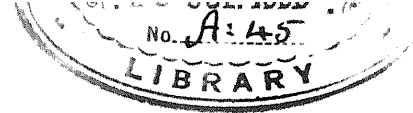


1898.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA



R E P O R T

ON THE

M A R I N E F I S H E R I E S

ON THE

SOUTH AND SOUTH-WESTERN COASTS

OF THE COLONY OF



WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.*

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1898.

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*Report on the Marine Fisheries on the South and South-Western  
Coasts of the Colony of Western Australia.*

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*To The Honourable George Throssell, M.L.A., Commissioner of Crown Lands, Perth.*

SIR,

Department of Lands, Perth, 13th May, 1898.

In pursuance of the commission entrusted to me to inquire into and report upon the state of the Fisheries in the Estuaries and Sea-Coast of the South and South-West portions of your Colony, I have the honour to state as follows:—

MANDURAH.

Following your suggestion, I proceeded first to Mandurah, a small village some 40 miles Southerly from Fremantle, and situated on the Eastern bank of the channel entrance to an extensive water known as Peel's Inlet, which connects another spacious water, the Harvey Estuary, with the sea.

This inlet and estuary, with their tributary streams, may be claimed as the present principal source of the fish supply. From their importance in this respect, it will be clear that too much care can scarcely be taken to conserve and develop their resources.

Though these waters should abound with almost every species of estuarine edible fish, indiscriminate netting, and the neglect of measures proper to maintaining the continuity of supply, were leading to so great a depletion of the fish fauna that it became necessary to place such restrictions upon netting as would eventually restore these waters to their normal productiveness. In my report on the Mandurah Fisheries, appended hereto, I recommended the prohibition of netting in certain parts of them, and I am gratified in being able to state that the result so far is very encouraging; improvement is already manifest, and not the least pleasing feature in connection with it has been the readiness of the fishermen generally to recognise the restriction and to obey it.

In recording this, it is proper to say that their ready co-operation materially assists the work of oversight, and brings it quite within the scope of the one inspector appointed to perform it.

Of the Fish-canning Industry, to which I have elsewhere referred, I may say that whatever the future of that industry may be (and that there is room for its expansion into enormously large proportions I have not any doubt), to Mr. Robert Smart and Mr. Charles Tuckey, of Mandurah, is to be accorded the credit of having proved the profitableness of enterprise in this direction, and to those gentlemen belong the distinction of having been the pioneers of the industry in this Colony.

COOL STORAGE COMPANY'S ESTABLISHMENT, MURRAY RIVER.

By the invitation of the Manager, Mr. A. Grant, I had the opportunity of inspecting the cool storage chambers for fish at the Company's works on the Murray River. Of the excellence of the arrangements there I cannot speak too highly; there are four cooling chambers, and the three of them in use were remarkable for their order and cleanliness. There was nothing present about them to offend either the eye or the nose; the fish stored therein comprised most of the edible species common to the adjacent waters. According to species and size, so were they ranged round the chambers in single tiers, on trays constructed of galvanised wire netting, each fish being separately and completely surrounded by the cooled air. The output from the works has been from twenty-five to thirty cwts. per week; and were the supply readily obtainable, there is a market for a much larger quantity, the works themselves being capable of treating up to eighteen tons of fish per week.

Considering the importance of the Mandurah Water, both as a fish producing and fish preserving centre, it must be obvious that the means of access to it are very far from adequate; the bar at the mouth of the channel is constantly shifting, and always shallow, and is available only to boats of light draft, while its tributary, the Murray River, is, from a like cause, negotiable only by the very smallest craft, so that although Mr. Grant's company possesses a steamboat suitable for carrying fish in quantity from the various fishing grounds on the estuary and the adjacent open sea, its services cannot be availed of. On the land side Mandurah is separated from railway carriage by a stretch of flat country measuring some 15 miles across, so that to a very appreciable extent the village is practically cut off from trade

communication with those populous centres with which, in the best interests of her industrial capabilities, it should be her policy to cultivate relations. It is not within the purpose of this report to discuss those other industries which the residents around Mandurah claim would be established if convenient means were provided either by land or water, or both, such as brick making, lime burning, wood cutting, agriculture, etc. These each have their claims, and ample pleas could be advanced for their consideration; but from the fisheries aspect, with which only I have to do; and viewing these waters as the principal fish producers adjacent to the metropolis, and in the interests of the fisheries industries already established there, it seems my duty to represent as clearly as I can the necessity for providing a means of communication to meet the requirements of the locality.

Owing to the absence of records, it has not been possible to obtain absolutely reliable statistics of the quantity and species of fish captured in the Colony. That is an omission which should be rectified so soon as amended fisheries legislation has been enacted, and a Fisheries Department formed.

In the meantime, so far as Mandurah is concerned, I have been enabled, with the aid of the Inspector recently appointed, to secure the following approximate record:—In the month of February there was captured in the waters there a total weight of 7 tons 16 cwts. of fish; in March 8 tons 13 cwts. 2 qrs., and in April 9 tons 3 cwts.—mullet predominating in each case.

#### THE MUNGAH.

In offering the foregoing remarks regarding the Mandurah fisheries, I ought not to omit a reference to that very destructive engine for fish capture constructed by the aboriginals: I mean the mungah which is erected across the Serpentine River near the bridge, on the road from Pinjarrah to the village. This mungah, which is a kind of weir formed by a line or fence of brushwood crossing at a long angle from one side of the river to the other, makes, with the opposite bank at which it terminates, a *cul de sac* towards which fish large and small, traversing the river to the inlet or in search of food, are gradually and imperceptibly led to their capture.

The aboriginals have a superstition that ill luck will attend them if they allow but one fish to escape this contrivance, so that the industry with which they compass the capture of every fish may be imagined.

I believe efforts are being made to establish a claim to the private ownership of the Serpentine River, as a part of the original grant. If such a claim should be confirmed, the fisheries will sustain a severe check by the avenue it will open for indiscriminate fishing; and I cannot too strongly urge the necessity for the Government to acquire at least such a right over that river as will be sufficient to ensure its complete protection against the use of nets or other contrivances for fish capture.

#### SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS.

Commercially considered, the Swan and Canning Rivers can scarcely become an important fishery, their embouchure being through the harbour and port of Fremantle; the commotion created by the passage of vessels inwards and outwards, coupled with the disturbing influences of the varied operations common to sea-ports so largely frequented by shipping as Fremantle is, and will be, must prejudicially affect its value as a fishery, at any rate so far as the anadromous species are concerned. Indeed, I understand that few persons even now find more than occasional employment in fishing in those rivers and they, principally, are men who follow this calling only when work in their own particular avocations becomes slack, and their catches generally comprise a large proportion of undersized fish; not only so, but during the prawn-season, which extends from December to May, the capture of this crustacea is prosecuted with the utmost vigour, many boats being employed, and each making three or more hauls in a night, and, as stated in another part of this report, there is not, beyond the enactment of a close season, any law to regulate the capture of prawns. The prawners use the ordinary length of fishing net, but composed of very small mesh, and this net enfolds not only prawns, but large quantities of immature fish, so that apart from the adverse influence at the mouth of the rivers the decimation of small fish in their upper parts progresses in alarming proportion. It does not, however, follow that because these rivers seem to be subject to obstacles in the way of fish propagation that their resources, however circumscribed they may be, should not be conserved as far as possible. Besides, although it may be beyond present expectation that they will yield permanent employment to a reasonable number of professional fishermen, yet they undoubtedly offer to amateur line-men and anglers a splendid field for recreation and amusement; and in designing provisions for the regulation of the fisheries it is only equitable that the needs and interests of the numerous class of persons whose avocations compel them to a sedentary life in the city and suburbs, and in Fremantle also, should have consideration, and especially so when it can be given without unduly interfering with rights which the professional fisherman may be disposed to claim as inherently his own.

Holding these views, I have had no hesitation in officially suggesting that the Swan and Canning Rivers be closed in their whole lengths against netting for a period of two years. This done, the young fry in their upper parts will have opportunity to mature, and in the matter of prawn capture, which will not arise until December next, opportunity should be taken in the meantime to arrange for its regulation by legislative enactment.

#### KING GEORGE'S SOUND, PRINCESS ROYAL AND OYSTER HARBOURS.

These, the most Southern waters of the Colony, abound with fish-life equally with other of her fish bearing inlets; but owing to their remoteness from the Capital and other populous localities, their resources have not been placed under tribute to the full extent of their capabilities. They have been availed of chiefly to supply the needs of Albany, the more or less adjacent towns and settlements, the steam and other vessels calling at the port *en route* to destination and the goldfields. Taken together, these waters are of considerable extent, and the inlets enjoy the advantage of free communication with the sea. The King and Kalgan Rivers, tributaries of Oyster Harbour, are the spawning grounds and nurseries for many species of fish. As a field for enterprise in the establishment of fishing industries these waters offer unusual facilities, especially in regard to convenience for direct shipment of goods for export.

#### SHARKS BAY.

I have not yet found opportunity to visit Sharks Bay, but have it on the authority of Mr. C. F. Gale, the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries there, that the bay teems with an endless variety of edible fish, though beyond what has been needed for local requirements, fish capture has not been attempted on any considerable scale owing to the impossibility of conveying catches in a fresh state to Fremantle, none of the trading steam vessels being furnished with the necessary cooling chambers.

From conversations I have had with Mr. Gale, I feel assured that Sharks Bay offers ample scope for the creation of a considerable fresh fish trade; and certainly the establishment of two or three well appointed canneries would yield very profitable results to their promoters.

#### THE LESCHENAULT ESTUARY.

The remarks I have recorded in my special report on the fisheries at Mandurah apply so nearly to the conditions which I found existing at the Leschenault Estuary at Bunbury, and at the Vasse and Wonnerup Estuaries at Busselton, that little more than passing comment on the few distinctive features which mark those waters is necessary here. A reference to my special reports, which are included amongst the appendices, will convey all such detailed information as may probably be needed. At the Leschenault Estuary I found a very judicious closure against netting operations had already been made. It embraced the upper parts of the estuary with the tributary streams, so that it needed only the additional closure at the entrance to secure the requisite free passage to and fro for the anadromous fish. As at Mandurah, so here also, I found the fishermen most ready to concur in the measures requisite to improve the resources of their fishing grounds, and this ready acquiescence in the further restriction I had to suggest materially facilitated work. Though scarcely within the reach of present probabilities, yet in the interests of the fish supply of the future, I must press into notice the advantage which would accrue from scooping out the cutting (suggested in my special report) through the narrow part of the sand bank which separates this estuary from the sea. The importance of providing the supply of sea water such a cutting would admit, would be difficult to appraise. I am pleased to chronicle the fact of having placed a number of crayfish along the breakwater at Bunbury harbour; it is yet all too early to ascertain the success of the experiment, suffice to say that the numerous cavities which occur between the huge blocks of stone forming the breakwater seemed to offer just the shelter which this crustacean needs, and I think the experiment, which is not costly, might be twice or thrice repeated. Destruction of fish-eating birds, which abound on this water, as indeed they do also elsewhere, is a matter which engaged my attention, and resulted in the enactment of regulations dealing with the subject. To these I refer in another portion of my report.

#### THE VASSE AND WONNERUP ESTUARIES.

Practically, net-fishing is not carried on in these estuaries; only very occasionally the net has been drawn in the Wonnerup. The netters rely upon the waters of Geographe Bay for their supply, and this bay being in effect the open sea I did not discover any need for restricting fishing operations, except in so far as was necessary to provide unimpeded passage to the estuaries. The closures here against netting are therefore confined to the inlets, and quite a limited area on either side of the connecting channel. The physical conformation of Geographe Bay is suggestive of its peculiar suitability for fish production, yet at the time of my visit only about eight boats and twenty men appeared to have been employed in fishing. This fishery has the seeming disadvantage of remoteness from the Capital; but as, like the

Bunbury waters, it possesses direct railway communication, and can have the aid of cool storage cars for conveyance of the catches, its resources should present greater attraction to fishermen, and be more largely availed of.

#### FISH MARKETS.

A central market must be a principal factor in connection with any scheme for the regulation of the fisheries, and for several reasons, the foremost being the safeguard it offers to the public health in securing the effective inspection of fish by qualified officers before it passes into distribution for consumption.

From an economic standpoint also, and viewed in the interests of catcher and consumer alike, a central station where sellers and buyers can meet, where the question of demand and supply can be gauged, and where fish can be assorted according to quality, and over-supply stored in cool chambers, where a check can be maintained upon the display of immature fish, and where also transactions can, to an extent, be controlled, or at least regulated by official authority, suggests advantages the value of which cannot well be over estimated. The fisherman who, from the permanent nature of his ware, is at present compelled of necessity to part with it, oftentimes at the quite nominal terms a buyer may choose to offer, is obviously at a material disadvantage; and this is especially the case at Fremantle, where the facilities for regulating the fish trade are conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, I have heard that instances have not been infrequent where fishermen, rather than accept prices tendered by some buyers, have taken their catch away to sea and cast it overboard. This reprehensible action was, perhaps, under the circumstances seemingly justifiable to the catcher; yet, involving as it did a shameful waste of valuable and highly prized food, it is one which, in the future, will of course have to be checked; and nothing seems so likely to attain that result as the establishment of a first class market, furnished with necessary accessories, where the fisherman can bestow his goods, and where, by the medium of open public competition, he can be assured of securing a fair monetary return for his labours. Up to the present time no statistics are on record from which it would be possible to estimate, with any degree of reliability, the difference existing between the fish supply and the demand; only the incontestible fact stands out in bold assertiveness that although the Colony possesses a length of thousands of miles of indented coast line, teeming along its whole extent with edible fish in amazing variety, yet fish, as a food, is practically available only to the more well-to-do classes, and is barely known except as a choice luxury in homes of the less fortune-favoured sections of the community. Any scheme advanced for the improvement of the fisheries will, however, fall short of efficiency in so far as it fails to destroy this anomaly and make fish food available to the poorer classes of the people in every population centre of the Colony, and such a scheme is certainly capable of accomplishment. The utmost care is needed in selecting a location for a central market, for on its position its utility will very largely depend. A market inconveniently situated will certainly prove more or less a failure. The best authorities favour a site easily accessible by water, rail, and road. A market thus placed should have ample covered accommodation for an effective display of the fish, and for the convenience of buyers and sellers, together with spaces for receiving and unpacking goods direct from either boat, railway car, or cart. There should be provided also all necessary approaches, sidings, and wharfage accommodation, with other requisite internal conveniences, including especially, sufficiency of cool storage accommodation to receive the over-supply which will from time to time accumulate. It seems hardly necessary to plead in support of the advantages which a market thus situated and so furnished would afford; but if a plea were demanded, it could be at once advanced in connection with the schnapper supply at Safety Bay, Warnsbro' Sound. During the fishing season there, which lasts from the middle of October to the end of December, schnapper, weighing up to 40lbs., are captured in such amazing numbers as to become quite a drug in the market, and instances are not wanting where these fine fish have been cast into the sea by the fishermen on their return journey from Fremantle, simply because a buyer for them could not be found. By the aid of cooling chambers, such as I have suggested, all this and other overplus wealth of fish food could be preserved for an unlimited period, and the equalisation of the supply and demand materially assisted. It must, however, be remembered that a central market is not the one essential needed to regulate the fish supply; a market, complete and extensive as it may be in its surroundings and conveniences, is really but little more than the initial point of the line to be traversed; for the daily supply of fish brought to it has yet to be distributed over the metropolis and amongst the outlying centres of population, and it is in the completeness and effectiveness of the means employed to secure this distribution that the success of any scheme of the kind is to be estimated. This success can be assured by auxiliary markets established at populous townships; these auxiliaries need not be of costly construction; quite simple buildings, furnished with cool storage, or an ample ice supply, and plain conveniences for sale purposes, would meet all local requirements; and, not infrequently, a portion of the railway premises might be utilised for the purpose; at any rate, like the central market, they should be conveniently situated for access, and available to the

public at all times of the day. The advantages of such adjuncts in helping the public to a sound, cheap and plentiful fish supply would seem at once to commend themselves; they should, where possible, be placed under municipal control.

Reverting to the subject of cool storage accommodation, care should ever be taken to ensure that the fish admitted therein shall be in an absolutely fresh state, and evisceration and cleansing made a hard and fast precedent condition. It is not infrequently contended that fish decompose very rapidly after removal from the cooling chamber. That such is often the case will be readily admitted, but the cause must be sought elsewhere than in the cooling process. A very little investigation will show that subsequent rapid decomposition is due to the fish being in an unsound state when placed in the chamber; and so long as it was subject to its cooling influence so long was the progress of its further decomposition arrested; but, removed to the normal temperature, the putrefactive process recommences from the exact point at which its progress was stayed. It is evident, therefore, that constant care will be needed to ensure that only fish in its freshest state shall obtain admission to the cooling rooms. Indeed, were it possible at once to educate the public and the fisherman to the necessity for such a radical change, it would be desirable to insist that all fish should be eviscerated and cleansed immediately after capture. It is surprising that in a climate subject as this is to extremes of prolonged heat, the practice of travelling fish over extended distances with all the materials of putrefaction present within them should have for so long obtained. Even in the North Sea fisheries, where climatic conditions are immeasurably more favourable, this system of cleansing fish after capture is practised, and it must be obvious to anyone that it is a most important factor in maintaining the soundness of an exceptionally perishable article. From an economic point of view it is quite worth consideration whether it would not be advantageous to promote the interests of this system by offering substantial concessions, in the shape of reduced railway freights and market dues, to fishermen bringing fish to market ready prepared for cooking. Fish food is not infrequently discarded by the housewife because of the trouble involved in its preparation; if it could be offered to her in a condition as ready for the pan as would be a beef steak or mutton cutlet, its own excellence would frequently secure its preference.

#### WELL BOATS.

So much, then, for the treatment of dead fish; but, fortunately, it happens that some fishermen bring their catches to Fremantle alive by means of well-boats; this is a system of transit very highly to be commended and encouraged. In the construction of these boats the centre portion is partitioned off by strong bulk-heads at about one-third of the distance from the stem and the stern of the boat respectively; the centre space thus formed is termed the well, and, being pierced with numerous holes, free passage for the flow of the sea water through it is provided. In this space or well most species of fish can be travelled alive for long distances. In Hobart (Tasmania) the well-boat system is very largely employed, and is attended with most satisfactory results. The buyer is relieved from all doubt as to the freshness of his purchase, as he selects his fish direct from the well alive, and the seller secures a higher price. The fish market at Hobart is located at the central wharf, at the extreme edge of the water. In a space set apart for the purpose are quite a number of submerged fish tanks constructed of batten work, and secured with a padlock. These severally belong to fishermen who use well-boats. On arrival at the market the contents of the well are transferred to the tanks to await sale, and the fisherman is left free to return to the fishing grounds for a further catch.

#### MARKET SITE.

Now, in the matter of access, Fremantle seems to recommend itself as exactly the proper location for the Central Fish Market, because it is in direct communication by rail with the metropolis, and with all the centres of population scattered along the railways to every remote part of the colony; and, moreover, because the railway terminus at Fremantle is so conveniently situated in respect to the wharves, equally ready access by water from the principal fishing grounds is secured. As regards the town itself, there is the further advantage that the supply of fish food to this, the chief and populous seaport, would be directly and for ever assured. It is, therefore, with the utmost confidence I recommend that the Central Fish Market be established there.

#### MARKET CONSTRUCTION.

The market should embrace ample covered space to afford due accommodation for buyers and sellers, standing room for goods in process of packing and re-packing, facilities for removing fish from the boats, and a siding from the building to the railway to allow of consignments being placed on the trucks with the least possible handling. Fish cannot be repeatedly handled without damage and without expense; therefore, in designing a market, means for reducing handling to a minimum should ever be kept in front view. Above and beyond all this an absolute essential in a central fish market will be a perfect up-to-date cooling chamber of sufficient dimensions, with adjuncts in the shape of cleansing troughs, show slabs,

offices, and all other requisite appurtenances. With a Central Fish Market provided with such appliances it should be easily possible to securely store all excesses of supply, and by means of the excellent railway system existent here, to convey fish in suitably arranged refrigerating cars to every town in the Colony with which communication has been established.

#### TRANSIT.

Of course, in view of the impermanent nature of fish, and its value to the people as an article of food, it is necessary that its transmission to distant parts should not be hampered by excessive freight charges; indeed, it would seem to be to the public advantage that the practice prevailing on most of the railway lines in England which tap fishing centres, of conveying fish inland at quite nominal charges, should be adopted here. The comparatively high price of beef and mutton, and the scanty supplies obtainable in some localities, viewed alongside of the untold abundance of food fish along the whole stretch of the coast-line, suggest the conclusion that no effort should be left untried to secure to communities in remote parts supplies of the latter in ample quantities at the least possible transit cost. I apprehend that this, as well as every other means by which the production and distribution of fish food can be encouraged and helped, will commend themselves to all who hold its value in proper appreciation. In Victoria, much attention is bestowed upon the transit of fish; where cool storage cars are not available trucks of ice are sent from Melbourne by the Railway Commissioners to stations adjacent to fishing centres, and are there stored in sheds on the station premises awaiting use; the fisherman conveys his fish to these ice depôts, and, receiving the needed quantum, crushes it into small morsels, packs his fish in layers amongst it, and so secures the arrival of his consignment at market, oftentimes over a long route, in a fresh state. The freights charged are low, and the ice is supplied at a cheap rate; the results being that the public receive their fish in excellent condition; and loss to the producer, through fish becoming unfit for food while in process of transit, is reduced to a minimum.

#### FISH BASKETS.

I have no word to say in favour of the baskets now employed for the conveyance of fish; though they are in common use elsewhere, I have no hesitation in pronouncing them as altogether cumbersome and ill-shaped, and in connection with any well devised system for transit of fish in cool chambers, either by steam carrier or rail, where economy in space and direct contact with the cooling medium are amongst the first desiderata, are utterly unsuitable. In lieu of these, I favour the employment of shallow rectangular boxes constructed of small meshed galvanised iron wire netting stretched upon light iron frames of defined dimensions, so constructed that when packed in a railway car or steam carrier the cold air of the chamber may pass around, above, and below each box. By the adoption of a package of this description, fitted with a lock and keys, and, which need not be more costly than the present mis-shapen basket, the depth of which alone renders the bottom layers of fish liable to be crushed out of shape by the superincumbent weight, thus accelerating the process of decomposition, fish might be travelled so securely as to present, on arrival at market, an appearance of preservation and attractiveness to be looked for in vain under the existing system; moreover, the adoption of boxes such as these will ensure the safe arrival of their contents at their journey's end; for, though not perhaps obtaining here, it has been a matter of general complaint elsewhere that a large amount of pilfering from the ordinary baskets takes place principally on the steamboats, or on the wharves, or from the carts which convey the baskets from the wharves to the markets. It will be obvious with what ease medium sized fish could be abstracted from packages constructed of such flexible material as cane or willow, especially when, as is so frequently the case, they are despatched from the fishing grounds with the lid secured only by a piece of string. With respect to these and other suggestions appearing in the course of this report, I may, perhaps, be met by the objection that their adoption would involve loss of time, and too much trouble on those concerned, and that the present, shall I call it rough and ready system of packing and transmission in an entirely unprepared state, etc., is amply sufficient for all practical purposes. Well, it is just this rough and ready means, coupled with the indifference of many engaged in the fisheries, and their objections to innovations which might displace the primitive practices of their craft, that have helped to reduce the fisheries to their present unsatisfactory position. Any industry, no matter what it may be, will need constant care and study to enable it to keep up to the ever progressing standard of public requirements; and especially must this be the case with the various industries which find their bases in such a perishable article as fish. If the fisheries of this Colony are to be established on a judicious and comprehensive system, such as will justify the expectation of profitable results, old time practices will have to be discarded, and businesses in connection with them worked upon lines dictated by intelligence and progress.

#### FACILITIES FOR SUPERVISION.

It will be evident that to ensure the efficient regulation of the fisheries, strict official supervision will be necessary in all the different waters, and means must be provided to facilitate the movements of

the supervising officers over them. For this purpose boats suited for the requirements of the particular water in which they are to be employed, will be needed. In the estuaries, Peel's Inlet at Mandurah for instance, a stiff sailing boat, capable of combating their oftentime turbulent waters, will be requisite, as well as a flat-bottom scow to traverse the flats and shallows which abound; while, for the fisheries generally, a more substantial lugger-rigged craft of centre board build, capable in moderate weather of patrolling the offing fisheries between Fremantle and the Vasse, and of sufficiently light draft to allow of its passage through the usually shallow channels of the estuaries, would be needed. In addition to sails, this vessel should, as well, be supplied with an oil engine as a motive power during calms at sea, and when employed in the estuaries. These oil engines are very economical in use, and some of them very effective; they require no fuel beyond kerosene, and can be worked by anyone possessing ordinary intelligence; thus their use obviates the necessity for the employment of skilled mechanics to drive them. They are largely in use in America, on the Continent, and in England. The Loudon County Council employs a considerable number of them. In the Lands Department is a minute from me in which the description of vessel I recommend for use in the fisheries is more fully detailed.

#### FISH CANNING INDUSTRIES.

While food fish are present in untold abundance along the whole stretch of Western Australia's enormous coast-line, and only enterprise and capital are needed to establish such large industries in connection with them as would secure, not only a plethora of wholesome diet to the entire community, but as well create an export trade of no inconsiderable importance, the startling fact has to be recorded that in 1897 there were imported into the Colony no less a quantity than 1,706,693 pounds, or nearly 762 tons in weight of fish, carrying a declared value of £33,877 sterling, while the total quantity conveyed by rail for the same period from the Colony's own waters amounted to little more than 583 tons of gross weight. Surely the contemplation of figures such as these, will suggest to persons seeking employment for their capital what a splendid investment lays ready to their hand, presenting possibilities of profit which it would be difficult to over-estimate.

The preservation of fish by canning is so universal, and the process so simple, and the machinery comparatively inexpensive, that, given the raw material in large supply, there is nothing to hinder the industry being profitably undertaken at every point on the coast where facilities for fish capture are available. I have heard it contended that of all the species of food fish on the coast, only mullet and one or two other varieties can be successfully canned. From personal experience I am in a position to assert that such is not the fact.

In New South Wales I have had a principal part in determining and arranging exhibits for the several Industrial Expositions which, during the last 16 years, have been held in different parts of the world. At these Expositions canned fish has ever been a chief feature, and has always been awarded valuable prizes or honourable mention. The displays embraced every species of edible fish common to the New South Wales coast, and every one of them, in the canned state, were an undoubted success. I record this from my own personal knowledge of the fact, and I would have it known that there is not one of the ordinary food species on the Western Australian coast which will not also, in the canned state, correspond in excellence with that which it is known to attain when cooked in the ordinary way soon after capture. At Mandurah there are two excellent canneries at which best work is turned out. It is only necessary to sample the fish preserved there by Mr. Robert Smart and Mr. Charles Tuckey to be assured of the splendid quality of food which can be turned into account from the fishes of Western Australia.

It is not infrequently asserted that no species of fish which the Australian coast generally can produce is at all to be compared with the imported tinned salmon. I take leave to dispute that assertion; I am not, of course, contending that the imported article has no marked excellence as a food—it is often of first quality—but I claim, and many connoisseurs claim also, that in those attributes it does not by any means surpass the sea mullet, which, in some of its life habits, it distinctly resembles, when captured and canned at the season of its return from the sea, big with roe, to its native waters.

There is no valid reason why canneries should not be at once profitably established at the several fishing centres from which the Colony at present derives its supply, as well as at other waters, which, from their remoteness, have not contributed any supply at all. These in operation, the last will have been heard of boat loads of valuable food having been taken out to sea and cast overboard because a sale for them could not be found. The catches then would ever mean money to the catcher, and general profit to all engaged in the industry. Recurring to the figures before quoted, there would seem to be no grounds for regarding these expectations as extravagant. With not very far less than two million pounds weight of imports, hardly one tithe of which ought to find a footing in the Colony, the profit attachable to speculation in this direction, amplified as it might be by including the several kindred industries of smoking and drying fish, and the preparation of oils, isinglass, glue, manure, etc., will scarcely be questioned.

## TURTLES.

It may not be generally known that turtle of the Hawk's Bill variety, prized commercially for the value of its shell, as well also of the green turtle, which possesses exceptional gastronomic value, and has ever provided an honoured dish at civic banquets in the Home land, abound on the North-West coast of this Colony, and yet it may be said that no attempt has been made to utilise these creatures for commercial purposes.

The suggestions I have offered respecting the important industry of fish canning apply with equal, if not greater, force to the turtle, which, unlike fish, being comparatively confined in its range of habitat, commands a value exclusively its own.

The markets of the world are not by any means too well supplied with the products obtainable from the turtle, and it would be difficult to foretell the success which a perfectly appointed establishment for conducting the various processes by which this creature can be made useful to the needs and conveniences of mankind would command. The European markets have hitherto been largely dependent upon the West Indies, Ascension and St. Vincent Islands for turtle delicacies, and there seems no reason why Western Australia also should not attempt to secure advantage from its possession of a gift which Nature has so generously bestowed, by utilising it for the benefit and profit of the community. The desirableness of giving attentive consideration to the industries awaiting creation in this connection cannot be too strongly impressed upon those who may be seeking avenues for enterprise, and the employment of their capital.

Much attention has been bestowed of late years upon the subject of fish culture, and it has been found not at all an impossible task to propagate many of the sea species as easily as trout and other salmonidæ; but turtles, as well as fish, can also be brought within the range of culture. So far as protecting the eggs and the young animals were concerned, it has, notably at Ascension, been followed for some time; but later on a French naval officer, one M. Salles, conceived the idea that turtles might, during their young stage, be transferred to convenient and suitable localities, and confined there in enclosures constructed to meet the requirements of their life habits. M. Salles has described the manner in which these enclosures should be constructed, and the arrangements necessary for their food supply; but as the turtle industries in this Colony have yet to be undertaken, the natural supply would seem, for the present, sufficient to work upon, so that the matter of its artificial culture may be left for future opportunity.

## FISHERIES ENCOURAGEMENT.

In New Zealand very much attention has been bestowed upon fish preservation and curing. In the year 1885 its Legislature passed an Act to provide for the establishment of fishing towns and villages, also to encourage the fisheries, and to promote the production of canned and cured fish for export. This Act, known as the "Fisheries Encouragement Act," which offers facilities to persons engaged in the fisheries for acquiring residential and business sites, in addition to bonuses on export of canned and cured fish, received the support of the main body of members of both branches of the Legislature. It is said that what opposition it did encounter was chiefly from members who were opposed to the policy of granting bonuses on industries at all. Had it not been for the bonus element, which formed a prominent feature in the enactment, it would, it was thought, have passed through Parliament without opposition. I gather from an official record that the necessity for a measure of the kind was made apparent by the fact that in the six years ending 1885, fish had been imported into New Zealand to a declared value of over a quarter million of pounds sterling, which, with Customs duties added, made the cost to the retail purchasers not less than £327,000; in other words, the inhabitants of a country, the sea coast of which swarmed with fish, paid this amount of money away because they had been too supine to obtain their supplies from the waters fringing their own territory. The writer proceeds to show that the amount thus paid away for fish which they could have caught and cured for themselves, would have been more than sufficient to cover the interest on a loan which had been incurred for the construction of an important trunk railway.

The circumstances thus detailed of the New Zealand fish supply in 1885, occur to me as precisely similar to those which now obtain in regard to Western Australia. I am not aware how far the "Fisheries Encouragement Act" has met the expectation of its designers, but that it has, in some measure at least, achieved success, would seem to be implied by the facts that the New Zealand canned article may now be purchased at the shops in Perth, and that it has a reputation for superior excellence in quality.

## TRAWLING.

The suitability of the trawl for fishing in Australian waters has, for years past, been a disputed question among fishery savants in the Eastern colonies; and it is only through the quite recent efforts of Mr. Frank Farnell, M.P. (the President of the late Royal Commission on the New South Wales

Fisheries, of which I had the honour to be a member), that the problem may be considered solved. In the report of that Commission the expediency of testing the coastal waters by means of the trawl was very strongly asserted. The question, however, though of such manifest importance, was allowed to remain in abeyance until, with a pertinacity quite worthy of the cause, Mr. Farnell succeeded in obtaining the equipment of the New South Wales Government steamship "Thetis," and, by securing the use of the latest improved trawling apparatus, was fortunate in winning immense hauls of fish from every part of the coast on which he experimented. Mr. Farnell has proved incontestably that the trawl can be profitably employed on that coast, and in doing so has revealed the existence of a field for enterprise, and the employment of capital, which promises to be profitable in the highest degree.

I have no doubt that the coast of Western Australia, if tested under similar complete arrangements, and if found to possess stretches of ocean-floor free from obstruction, would prove equally productive; and according to the ardour and enterprise with which the fishing industry in its several branches shall be prosecuted in the future, so, sooner or later, will it be found to the interest of the country to solve the problem of the trawling question something after the manner in which it has been done in New South Wales.

## THE LONG LINE OR BULTOW.

A very effective instrument for the capture of predaceous fish, and one which can be used without detriment in waters closed against the use of fishing nets, is to be found in the shape of the long line or bultow; by some it is called "boulter" or "bulter." It consists of a line many hundreds of yards long, to which thinner lines, in lengths of six feet, are attached at intervals of 12ft. These thinner lines are called snoods, and carry the hook and its snooding attachment. The proportionate distances separating the snoods, and the lengths of the snoods themselves, must always be maintained, so as to prevent the entanglement of the lines which would otherwise result. As a precaution against the havoc which the cutting teeth of some predatory fishes would create amongst the snoods, the hooks themselves are secured to strong gut or twisted wire, or a line composed of separate threads very loosely fastened together. Buoys, buoy-ropes, and anchors, or heavy sinkers, are placed at each end of the line, which is always shot across the tide to allow of the snoods being drifted out at right angles and clear of the long line. The numerous hooks having been properly baited, the lines, with the snoods in regular order, are coiled in tubs or baskets for running out. The buoy-ropes are usually arranged to allow of the hooks reaching within, say, two feet of the bottom. The bultow is usually set late in the afternoon, and overhauled on the following morning. This is the practice followed by the fishermen on the Newfoundland banks, and in the Norwegian and North Sea fisheries, where the lines frequently extend for a length of two miles and more. But in more confined fisheries the lines and snoods may be of any convenient length to suit the particular fishing ground on which they may be employed, though, for the reason already explained, the proportionate distances between the snoods on the line, and the lengths of the snoods themselves, must always be maintained.

I have repeatedly seen this line used in the capture of the Murray cod, and can testify to its effectiveness. It would be quite a legitimate instrument for use in any of the closed waters in Western Australian estuaries and rivers, and in certain seasons in the offing fisheries also.

## CRUSTACEA.

For the edible crustaceans, except that the capture of the prawn is prohibited during seven months of each year, commencing in May, there is no law to regulate either their propagation or capture. Of the crayfish, the principal sources from which they are supplied to the metropolis are the submerged reefs and rocks surrounding Rottnest and Garden Islands, and spreading along the coast for some miles from Fremantle. The diminutive size of a large proportion of the crayfish daily exposed for sale in the Perth shops seems to suggest the necessity for placing some restrictions upon their capture; and in any future amendment of the fisheries laws this point should not be overlooked. The range of the gestation period of these fish from inception to the time the female throws off the berries, would absorb the better part of six months, probably from June to December. It is within this period that protection for propagation purposes should be afforded; but, unfortunately, the portion of it during which the female carries the "coral," is exactly the time when they are in best condition for food; so that to make a hard and fast close season in which they may not be captured, would result in unduly limiting the supply of a very excellent and highly prized diet. Effective means must, however, be taken to ensure continuous propagation, and this can best be done by proclaiming certain specified localities within which their capture shall not be permissible. The duration of the first close season should embrace a period of from two to three years. I suggest such a lengthened period, not so much to secure a substantial initial result in the propagation of the species, as to enable it to be determined whether the fish will not, by being afforded a prolonged opportunity to mature, acquire a greater size than is at present usually seen in the Perth shops. The crayfish on the coast of New South Wales, North of Port Jackson, are often

more than twice the size of those seen here; and as they seem to be subject to very similar pelagic conditions, the experiment is worth attempting. I am inclined to believe that it will succeed, because only a few days since I noticed some crayfish on exhibition for sale which appreciably exceeded the size usually seen at the fishmongers; doubtless these were older fish which had hitherto escaped capture.

Canned crayfish, in the opinion of many, surpasses much of the imported lobster in excellence and delicacy of flavour; and my own (already referred to) experience in directing the arrangement of New South Wales fisheries exhibits for display at the Industrial Expositions held of late years in various parts of the world, warrants me in asserting that the superiority of this crustacean cannot fairly be questioned.

#### CAPTURE OF FISH-DESTROYING BIRDS.

I have already officially represented the grievous waste of fish food created by the innumerable flocks of cormorants or shags, pelicans, etc., which infest every water in the Colony where fish are present. The result of my representations has been the offer by the Government of a reward of 3d. per head for the capture of shags in any portion of the Colony South of the Moore River, except in the Leschenault Estuary; and in that portion of the Swan River between the sea entrance at Fremantle and the Perth-Bunbury and Lower Canning bridges.

Though, doubtless, there are good reasons for thus restricting the area within which these birds may be destroyed, as also for entirely exempting the pelican from destruction, yet from the fisheries aspect these limitations are regrettable. The pelican, having an insatiable appetite, is a most voracious consumer of fish, which it captures with great adroitness, and supplies to repletion not only its present needs, but crams into its capacious pouch a large supply for immediate future use. It will be obvious what a disastrous effect the exclusion of this bird from the capture reward will have upon the fish supply. So detrimental to it does its exemption seem to me to be, that I venture respectfully to suggest that the subject might receive further consideration.

#### OYSTER CULTURE.

I have inspected several enclosures near Fremantle which certain dealers in oysters hold under yearly lease from the Crown. These enclosures, which are known as oyster punts, and embrace a few square yards of shallow water, are used for storing oysters brought hither principally from New South Wales and Queensland. They seem to answer their purpose very fairly. Without some such storage it would be impossible to keep oysters here for any appreciable time. In fact, as it is, the percentage of loss in the long transit across is so great as to considerably increase the ultimate cost of the article to the consumer. I was agreeably surprised to find that many of the oysters stored in the punt belonging to a dealer named Phalangas exhibited signs of active growth. If, as I was informed, these oysters had been laid there only three months previously, their growth shows as great a rapidity as any I have seen elsewhere, and it so far suggests the probability that this part of the Fremantle waters being suitable for oyster culture, some systematic attempt should be made to prove it.

It is contended by authorities that water containing about three per centum of salinity is the most favourable for the cultivation of the oyster, and I myself have been able to verify this theory in various localities. It is not claimed that this exact percentage is essential, but perfect results will only accrue when that strength is present. I took occasion to test the Fremantle waters, and found an average of a little over three and a quarter per centum of salinity. If this percentage can be fairly maintained through the winter months while the flood waters are passing down, I think oyster growth may be resuscitated in the locality, and if any enterprising person possessing requisite knowledge can be found to initiate an experiment in a proper and systematic way, he should be offered every reasonable concession in the matters of area and rental. If such an one does not present himself the attempt should be made by the Fisheries Department. Oysters have abounded here in a remote past, and effort should not be wanting to restore the supply. Sea water contains about five per centum of salinity; the necessity for a reduced percentage for the oyster is explained by the fact that it finds its food in a certain class of diatomic life, and this life is most suitable for the oyster where this degree of salinity exists; therefore, where it is most abundant there the oyster most excels. The extensive opening out of the harbour at Fremantle has led to a greater influx of sea water; and although the tide there is ever comparatively small, it must, for a short distance upwards from the mouth of the Swan River, beneficially affect that river for oyster culture; how far the winter flood waters will temporarily overcome the tidal influx and reduce the salinity has yet to be ascertained. Should the reduction be material it would be necessary, for the season at any rate, to remove the oysters to somewhat deeper parts where, perhaps, the commingling of the salt and sweet waters would provide the desired density, though on the other hand their sudden removal to waters deeper than that to which they have been accustomed is not infrequently attended with some degree of risk.

Oysters grown in the shallow waters would, in a manner, be equivalent to what are known, where tidal influence is greater than it is here, as foreshore oysters. By this term is meant oysters grown

between high and low, or a little below low water mark. In such surroundings they are prolific, and often of excellent quality, but they are not by any means to be classed with the still more excellent bivalves which are the produce of the deep water beds proper. The salinity of water covering a deep water bed is of a generally uniform degree. On a foreshore bed, or deposit as it more usually is termed, the salinity is not regular, being subject to the varied force and extent of tributary streams as they commingle by tidal agitation with the salt waters of an inlet.

As it may, perhaps, be questioned how the necessary fresh water can be present on a deep bed of oysters covered by salt water, it may be briefly explained that its presence is considered due to subterranean springs which, welling up through the floor of an inlet, create the reduced salinity requisite. But beyond the mere mention of them, the consideration of deep water oyster beds does not arise, at any rate at present. The creation of foreshore deposits, and their successful culture, is of more immediate concern; and in the inspection of the more Southern portion of the Colony the suitability of Oyster Harbour and its tributaries, the King and Kalgan Rivers, at once claims attention. Attempts to propagate the oyster at the King River had, I find, already been made; and if the site for laying had been more judiciously selected I doubt not that this river would by this time have been fairly on the way to become oyster producing. The mistake made was principally through placing a deposit of imported oysters in a position where they were for a considerable part of 24 hours out of the water; also, I think, it had not been ascertained that the proper degree of salinity was present; in fact the oysters had been left to take care of themselves. All this is, however, easily curable; I have had the oysters removed to more suitable ground, where I have reason to suppose that they will put on rapid growth. On my recent visit to the Eastern colonies I had in view to bring a quantity of oysters over for plantation, but the weather was so excessively hot that it would have been hazardous to attempt such an experiment then, so I decided to defer it to the winter months.

In the meantime the waters at Oyster Harbour are being examined to ascertain the best sites for layings, and I have large hopes of ultimate success. An attempt will be made also to establish the oyster in parts of the estuary at Mandurah, as evidences there also point to favourable results.

Near Maud's Landing, about 60 miles South from Exmouth Gulf, two natural deposits of oysters were recently discovered by Mr. E. B. Haughton, the local supervisor of Public Works. They are described as being a small rock oyster of good flavour, attached to narrow reefs which are dry at low water. A few of the oysters are of saleable size, but the greater proportion are too small to possess merchantable value.

Mr. Gale, the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries at Sharks Bay, reports that the same class of oysters are to be found at intervals along the North-West coast. I hope the suggestion I have made to remove some of these oysters to possibly more suitable localities in the waters at Mandurah and Oyster Harbour may be carried out. It is probable that the conditions necessary to their development may not be fully present at their native habitat, and that they will be found to thrive better in the less turbulent and possibly less dense waters of those inlets. The experiment would be quite inexpensive, and the progressive growth of the oysters placed there would be watched with interest. Should it succeed, the eventual stocking of the Southern waters will become a matter of very easy accomplishment.

Apropos of my remarks respecting the probability of the oyster being resuscitated in the waters above Fremantle, I took occasion a few days since to examine those stored in the "punt" there, belonging to Mr. C. Phalangas, of the Sydney Fish and Oyster Company, of Perth; and under the slabs which formed the floor—several of which the caretaker obligingly removed for my inspection—I found "ware" of about three months' growth, derived from spawn shedded in those waters from the imported oyster. I secured somewhere about 33 of these young oysters, and could have obtained more had it been worth while to tear up more of the floor. I had enough to show that spatting had so far succeeded as to place the practicability of oyster culture in that water beyond a doubt if only the winter floods should not prove so strong as to check their continuous development.

I consider the discovery as very encouraging, and also interesting, as being, so far as I am aware, the first recorded instance of spatting having occurred in the Fremantle waters.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF FISHES.

I have already had the honour officially to invite attention to the fact that this Colony does not appear to possess a complete set of specimens of the numerous species of edible fish which inhabit her waters. Observing this, and knowing the importance of securing such an aid to persons desirous of obtaining a scientific knowledge of the Colony's fishes, I took advantage of my recent visit to New South Wales to enlist the sympathies of Mr. Thomas Etheridge, the Curator of the Australian Museum, at Sydney, with the object of supplying the want. Mr. Etheridge warmly proffered his aid, and it was eventually arranged that I should supply him with specimens of the edible fishes in Western Australia.

and he would have them named and classified by a qualified ichthyologist. I hope to set the work in motion almost immediately, and when completed, propose to place the collection in the Museum at Perth, where it will be always available to the general public. The popular nomenclature given to a few of the species here differs from that which obtains in some of the other Australian colonies. I propose that the popular names by which the fish are locally known here, shall be recorded in the collection side by side with the appellations by which the fish are known to science. An innovation of this kind, for as such it will by some be regarded, will have the effect of making the collection interesting and instructive to the large class of persons who may have neither time nor inclination to take up the purely scientific side of the matter.

#### FISHERIES LIBRARY.

Co-ordinate with the importance of a scientific classification of the edible fishes is the necessity for a judiciously chosen library of standard works on fisheries. It is not generally known in the Australian colonies with what vast importance the fisheries in other parts of the world are regarded; they give employment to thousands upon thousands of persons, and thousands of vessels as well, and they are a chief factor in the wealth of many countries. As an instance of this, I happen to have by me some statistics, but dating so far back as 1882, from which I find that during the previous year, 1881, in the Scotch herring fisheries alone 8,279 boats were employed, manned by 43,837 fishermen and boys, whilst on the shore the services of 2,499 coopers, 18,854 gutters and packers, and 2,233 labourers were engaged in the various operations connected with the curing of the fish. The labours of these people, totalling 67,423 persons, resulted in the cure of 1,111,155½ barrels of herrings. Similar, and still more startling instances might be multiplied from more recent statistics, if such were available; but these enormous figures, illustrating the actualities in regard to one species only of fish in one particular locality may, though in a very faint degree, just help to show what incalculable potentialities the fisheries of the world at large possess; and yet in Australia we have so far but little knowledge whatever of this fact, and we surely have no particle of appreciation of the value of our own fisheries. While such amazing figures are required to show the results, dating so far back, of a year's work in Scotland alone, we are content to allow countless millions of herrings to pass along our coast quite regardless of the untold wealth they could be made to contribute to the community; and to acquire our own supplies from the more industrious and enterprising people of our antipodes.

These remarks may seem, perhaps, somewhat foreign to the subject under review—a Fisheries Library—but, if by means of them it may be possible through the institution of a library to bring the people face to face with more recent facts of a similar astounding character to the single one I have related, they will have served their purpose. The library should be carefully selected, and embrace works relating to the fisheries in every part of the world: their histories, their laws, descriptions of the numerous engines and modes of fish capture, oyster culture, crustacea, whale fishing, and the various industries having their bases in one or other of the many products of the sea. In fact, effort must not be wanting to make the library eventually so complete and comprehensive in its scope, and so continually up to date, that there shall be no one cognate subject on which any desired information may not be obtainable.

#### FISHERIES LEGISLATION.

The Acts relating to the fisheries are so incomplete in their provisions as to be practically valueless in some respects, and it is to be regretted that circumstances did not permit of the short Interim Bill I had drafted to amend those Acts being passed into law during the last session of Parliament.

Any systematic improvement in the fisheries must be preceded by suitable legislation, and this is a subject which should engage early consideration.

It must be recollected that the circumstances attending the progressive development of fisheries cannot always be foreseen, so that any hard and fast enactment might in the future be found unsuitable in one way or other, and so prove a hindrance rather than an aid. Thus much admitted, it would be necessary, in the matter of control, to extend very large powers to the Executive Council to make regulations in certain specified directions, and in all matters of detail. The enactment itself should determine the general lines on which the fisheries may be worked; it should define the constitution and scope of the governing power, authorise the appointment of necessary officers, specify the general principles on which fishing should be controlled and regulated, whether fishermen should be licensed, and on what conditions fishing privileges should be extended to aliens, etc. In respect to oyster fisheries it should define the lines on which land may be leased for oyster culture, and empower the determination of any such leases for neglect or mismanagement, provide for the establishment of public oyster reserves, and the institution of experiments in fish capture, and in the cultivation and propagation of fish or oysters, and also prescribe penalties for infringement of the Act or Regulations, as well as necessary legal procedure.

This report has reached a length far beyond my intention, but I discovered so much which it seemed necessary to convey respecting the vast subject of which it treats, that, though with every desire to abbreviate, I found it impossible to encompass within narrower limits.

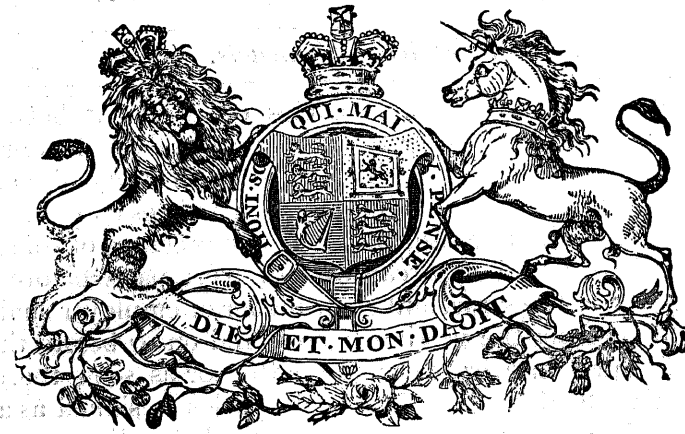
I trust, sir, that much of what I have said may prove of service in assisting you to determine upon a well devised plan for the future control and development of the extensive and valuable fisheries of Western Australia.

I have, etc.,

LINDSAY THOMPSON.







# WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

ANNO DECIMO

## VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

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NO. XVI.

AN ORDINANCE to provide a summary remedy for Breach of Contracts connected with the Fisheries of the Colony.

[ 2nd September, 1847. ]

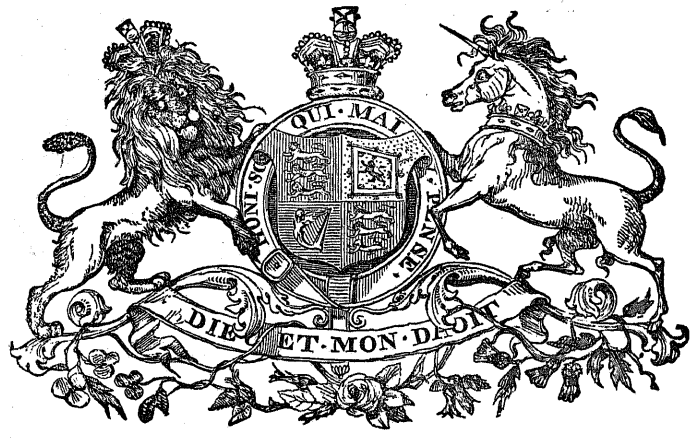
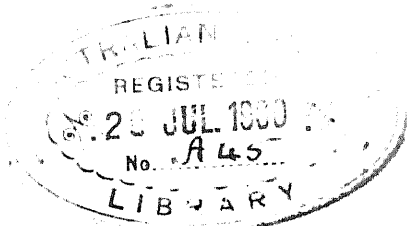
**W**HEREAS certain doubts have arisen concerning the decision of disputes between parties concerned in the bay whaling and other fisheries in this Colony; and whereas it is expedient to provide a summary remedy for such disputes;—Be it therefore enacted, by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia and its Dependencies, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council thereof, that the provisions of an Act passed in the sixth year of the reign of Her present Majesty, entitled *An Act to provide a summary remedy in certain cases of Breach of Contract*, shall (except as hereinafter modified) apply and extend to all owners or persons fitting out or providing for the whale or other fisheries of or belonging to this Colony, and all whalers and persons employed or engaged in any of the said services subject to the jurisdiction of the Colony;—Provided that all the powers and authority which by the aforesaid Act are given to any two Justices may for the purposes of this Ordinance be exercised by any one Justice;—Provided also that no Justice who is beneficially or as agent for another interested in any particular fishery shall act or adjudicate in any matter concerning the same under this Ordinance.

Preamble.

6th Vict. to be extended to Fishery contracts.

Proviso, jurisdiction in one Justice.

Proviso, Justice interested not to act.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

ANNO TRICESIMO SEPTIMO

VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

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No. XI.

AN ACT to repeal an Act intituled "An Act to regulate the hiring and service of Aboriginal Natives employed in the Pearl Shell Fishery; and to prohibit the employment of Women therein," and to make other provisions in lieu thereof.

[Assented to, 24th July, 1873.]

WHEREAS it is expedient to repeal an Act passed in the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Her present Majesty No. 14 intituled "An Act to regulate the hiring and service of aboriginal natives employed in the Pearl Shell Fishery: and to prohibit the employment of women therein," and to make other provisions in lieu thereof; Be it therefore enacted by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia and its Dependencies by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council thereof as follows:—

Preamble.

1 THIS Act may be cited for all purposes as "The Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Act, 1873."

Short Title.

## SCHEDULES.

## Schedule A.

*Form of Agreement between the Master or Owner of a Ship or any other person and an Aboriginal Native.*

THIS Agreement, made on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 18 \_\_\_\_\_,  
between A.B. (*name of master*) of \_\_\_\_\_ and C. (*using the native  
name of the native*) an aboriginal native of Western Australia, witnesseth:—

1. The said C. agrees to serve the said A.B. as (*here state the capacity in which the native is to serve*).
2. Such service to last until \_\_\_\_\_
3. C. is to begin work on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_
4. A.B. is to give C. during the said service \_\_\_\_\_ lb. of flour, \_\_\_\_\_ of tea, &c., per day; and at the commencement of the service is to give him (1 blanket, 1 pair of trousers, &c., &c.)
5. Before or at the termination of such service A.B. is to give C. &c.
6. Before the expiration of the service hereby agreed upon, A.B. will convey C., or cause him to be conveyed, to \_\_\_\_\_, that being the place or district to which C. belongs.

Schedule B.

## Schedule B.

*Form of Endorsement.*

I, the undersigned, being a (*Justice of the Peace, or police constable, or one of the persons appointed to ensure the carrying out of "The Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Act, 1873," as the case may be*) do hereby certify as follows:—

1. That the within agreement was this day entered into between A.B. and C., and respectively signed by them in my presence.
2. Before the said C. signed the same, I satisfied myself that the said C. was a perfectly free and voluntary agent in the matter, and was not acting under any sort of fear, coercion, or constraint.
3. That, before the said C. signed the same, I satisfied myself that the said C. thoroughly understood and assented to the terms and nature of the said agreement.
4. That the said C. is in my judgment a male aboriginal native physically fit for the employment agreed upon.
5. (That I satisfied myself that the said C. has not been engaged in the pearl shell fishery within twelve months of the date of this agreement *or* (That the said C. has been engaged in the pearl shell fishery within twelve months of the date of this agreement but I was perfectly satisfied that the said C. was, before the expiration of his said engagement, conveyed back to \_\_\_\_\_, such being the district or place to which, as I am informed and believe, the said C. belongs, *or*, conveyed back to \_\_\_\_\_, that being a place substituted for the district to which the said C. belongs, in accordance with the provisions of the ninth section of "The Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Act, 1873.")

(Signed) A. B.,

Justice of the Peace.

*or* Police Constable.*or* One of the persons appointed to ensure the carrying out of "The Pearl Shell Fishery Regulation Act, 1873."

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 18 \_\_\_\_\_,  
at (*Roebourne*), Western Australia. }

By Authority: RICHARD PETHER, Government Printer, Perth.