

cutters about eight or ten tons register. In some places at low water they can be gathered with the hands.

50. Have you any experience in oyster-breeding?—Yes.

51. What length of lease should be given to parties to induce them to prepare oyster-beds, and how many years must elapse after the first laying down the bed before oysters can be taken for sale?—The lessee's life, and his family and their family's lives. Due care should be taken that the beds do not interfere with the proper working of the ships, and that the selection should be out of the main channel. Oysters take from four to five years before they are fit for market.

52. What protection should be given to those parties owning oyster-beds?—The same as if a man stole a sheep from another, providing he marks off his boundary with beacons or buoys, or other approved means, and that a notice board be put up in a conspicuous part of the bed, cautioning people not to trespass.

53. Should vessels be allowed to anchor on the oyster-beds?—Due care should be taken that oyster-beds are not in the navigation of the river: I mean artificial beds. I would not stop the passage of boats, nor prevent boats anchoring; if they stole my oysters, and I found it out, I would summons them.

54. Any other general remarks?—Oysters spawn three months in the summer; the spawn floats in the water for a period of seven days, and then it sinks to the bottom; if it falls on good and clean ground, it prospers; if on the contrary, it perishes. Oysters should not be removed from natural beds during the three summer months. As to artificial beds there should be no restriction; the owner knows best what to do to protect his own interest. Oysters take four or five years before they are fit for market. The best way to catch oysters is by means of dredges. Care should be taken to destroy the enemy of the young brood; the enemies are the five-fingers, the dog welk, the starfish, the borer, the stingaree, with his tail. Transplanting of oysters should not be done during the three summer months, or spawning month. Oysters do not move from where they are first deposited, unless by some artificial means. It is my opinion that natural oyster-beds are to be found on the coast of Otago, such places as Blueskin Bay; I have dredged up large quantities of oyster shells in that vicinity, apparently not been dead long; but it is like gold digging, wants prospecting. A good sign of the whereabouts of oysters is where the burrs are to be found; they also destroy the oyster. Oysters improve by working among them; it makes them grow thicker, and breaks off the fin. The oyster spawns are too numerous to mention. Care should be taken to part them as often as convenient, to enable them to grow to their proper shape.

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