

James wrote to me that he had no doubt whatever of "perfect success next season, as we had now the key to the whole problem—namely, the period which ought to elapse between spawning and packing, and could insure the success of every egg we sent."

Very little interest, however, seemed to be taken in the colony on the subject. No papers were presented to Parliament in 1884, and when the new plan was decided upon, of subsidizing the acclimatization societies, no one apparently had realized that its first effect must be to deprive the colony of the particular feature which had created so much interest here—namely, a belief in the serious and persistent intention of the Government to follow up their experiments year by year until the success which was sure to come had been achieved. Many eminent pisciculturists had continued all through 1884 to look with keen interest to a renewal of the work in the coming season. Professor Huxley, then Her Majesty's Inspector of Fisheries, had given me his official exequatur for England and Wales, and had promised to go into all the details with me at the proper time in October. Mr. Ridley, Chairman of the Tyne Conservancy, had not only made most valuable and novel suggestions, but had provided everything for the taking and packing, so as to be ready for the first great run of fish in the Tyne. The Chairman of the Severn Conservancy had taken great pains about preparations for that river. All the Scotch Fishery Boards had acceded heartily to my request for leave to take ova, and their several superintendents had been ordered to be in readiness with nets and men at the proper moment. Sir James Maitland, who had done so much for us in 1883, had begun the preparations for 1884 with enthusiasm. We were to have had the services lent to us by the Home Office of Mr. Eden, Curator of the Buckland Museum at South Kensington, who would have been sent as soon as the Forth salmon should commence running; and, as the late Mr. Buckland's method of spawning differed from Sir James Maitland's, the two systems were to have been tested together at Howietoun Fishery. Everything had been made ready for the work on the Tyne, Tweed, Forth, and Teith, and the first twenty thousand ova had actually been got, with the certainty of a great quantity more in a few days, when your letter came telling me of the new plan that had been decided upon, whereupon all the pains that had been taken here were thrown away.

But, while a new plan was chosen, the societies did not give it much chance of success. I can only suppose it was from forgetfulness of the proper season that they delayed so long in sending Mr. Farr; at any rate, he was only leaving New Zealand within a few days of our taking the first twenty thousand ova here, and he not only did not get Home till the 13th December, but even then did not leave for Scotland till January. I had taken care to get the Fishery Boards to transfer to him the leave for taking ova, without which he would not have been allowed to move at all; and he throughout received in this office, especially from Mr. Kennaway, cordial help, which I do not observe he has anywhere acknowledged. When he got to Scotland he was met by the same assurances on every side that he had come too late; nor does it need more than a glance at his report, presented to Parliament last session, to see that it was by the merest accident he got any ova at all, and that the expense of his mission was very nearly thrown away.

The difficulty does not lie so much in getting ova as in getting them at the right moment, fertilizing them, and packing them in the right way when they are got. The whole process of their preparation from first to last is one for which there must be knowledge, skill, experience, incessant minute attention, and, above all, enthusiasm, to say nothing of a good deal of expense. I am not, for my own part, a believer in achieving success without.

I am not able even to ask again for the same personal interest and help as were so willingly given in 1883 and 1884; but I shall, of course, do what I can, all the same, to carry out the present views of the Government. I have had a long talk to-day with the new inspector, Mr. Berrington, who was appointed only last week, and for whose appointment I had been waiting. As you are no doubt aware, the question of herring, lobster, and crab does not press at this time of year; and, although it is not much that the Fishery Department can do for us in salmon ova, as they can neither undertake supervision nor responsibility, Mr. Berrington will, at any rate, do all that is in his power. Our chief hope must be, as before, in Sir James Maitland and the Scotch Boards, if they will overlook the disappointments of 1884. If they will, I may yet be able to send you some ova this season.

No doubt the professor to whom you allude is Professor Cossar Ewart, with whom I shall soon be again in communication about herring.

I have, &c.,

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

F. D. BELL.

No. 3.

The Hon. the COMMISSIONER of TRADE and CUSTOMS to the AGENT-GENERAL for NEW ZEALAND, London.

SIR,—

Government Buildings, Wellington, 31st December, 1885.

The Colonial Secretary has handed me your letter No. 1338, dated the 30th October, last as I believe, in reply to mine of the 15th August. I may mention that the subject to which these letters refer is now within the Customs Department under my charge, and I will ask you to be kind enough to address me when writing on the matter.

I may at once say that when, after newly taking office, the Government acceded to the request made by the acclimatization societies to send Mr. Farr to England, they were not, to the best of my belief, aware of all the exertions that you had made in regard to sending out ova, as shown by your letter now under reply. The request to send Home Mr. Farr was strongly pressed upon the Government, and they acceded to it, although they felt at the time that it was an expensive way of getting out fish ova, seeing that large parcels had arrived in the colony without any one specially in charge of them, and, as I mentioned to you before, fish ova has been packed in Washington, sent across to San Francisco by train, and forwarded thence to New Zealand, arriving in good condition.