

Enclosure 2 in No. 6.

REPORT of the TASMANIAN SALMON COMMISSIONERS, 1864.

To His Excellency Colonel THOMAS GORE BROWNE, C.B., Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the Colony of Tasmania and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

In the month of September, 1862, the Commissioners had the honor to report to your Excellency that, profiting by the important lesson derived from the history of the little box of salmon ova imbedded in moss, which had been placed in the ice-house of the "Beautiful Star," as detailed in the extract from Mr. W. Ramsbottom's log appended to their report dated August, 1862, they had resolved to send Mr. W. Ramsbottom back to England with the least possible delay, in order that he might assist in ascertaining from actual experiment for what periods the salmon ova packed in moss, and deposited in some of the ice vaults in England, might be kept in an undeveloped state and afterwards hatched into living fish.

In accordance with this determination of the Commissioners, Mr. Ramsbottom at once proceeded to Melbourne, from whence he took his departure in the steamship "Great Britain," and reached England in December.

While despatching Mr. Ramsbottom to England for the purpose mentioned, the Commissioners, retaining a lively sense of the zeal and energy displayed by their fellow-colonist Mr. J. A. Youl in the first attempt which they had made to introduce the salmon into the Colony, and then recently brought to an unsuccessful conclusion, addressed a letter to that gentleman, earnestly requesting his continued co-operation in their renewed endeavour to effect this great object; and subsequently committed the direction of all that was to be done in England to the Australian Association, to whom the management of the first experiment had been intrusted, knowing that, as on the previous occasion, it would practically devolve on Mr. Youl, one of its members.

The Australian Association accepted the trust which the Commissioners desired them to undertake, but immediately delegated to Mr. Youl "the sole superintendence of the necessary preparations for the renewed experiment about to be tried." How earnestly and zealously Mr. Youl discharged the duty thus devolving upon him, will appear from our further report of his labours in this patriotic undertaking.

Immediately on Mr. Ramsbottom's arrival in England, the experiments to which the Commissioners have referred, and to the issue of which they looked forward with the deepest interest, were commenced under Mr. Youl's direction, and carried on during the year 1863.

The success of these experiments fully satisfied the expectations of the Commissioners, at whose instance they were undertaken. A large proportion of the ova that had been deposited in the Wenham Lake Company's ice vaults in London, for periods varying from 45 to 144 days, were found at the end of those periods to be still in a state of healthy vitality; and were afterwards hatched into vigorous fish by various pisciculturists to whom they were committed after removal from the ice vaults.

In the conduct of these experiments Mr. Youl was zealously assisted by W. Ramsbottom, by his father, Mr. R. Ramsbottom, of Clitheroc, and by the Manager of the Wenham-Lake Ice Company, who, on Mr. Youl's application, had generously granted the free use of their vaults in London, in which they were carried on through their first stage. The result of these experiments constitutes, the Commissioners believe, one of the most valuable discoveries ever yet made in the art of pisciculture, and must ever indicate an important era in its history.

This result was no sooner communicated to the Commissioners than they came to the conclusion that this was the method by which the salmon was to be successfully introduced into the waters of Tasmania; and that the expensive, troublesome, and uncertain mode of conveying the ova in suspended trays, requiring a constant stream of iced-water to pass over them, might henceforth be dispensed with.

They were unanimously of opinion that, in the condition of ova placed in an ample body of ice on board a fast vessel sailing direct to Hobart Town, the salmon could not fail of reaching their destination in safety. This opinion the Commissioners conveyed to the Australian Association, and was, as far as possible, carried into practical effect by Mr. Youl. That gentleman, however, found on this, as on the previous occasion, that his principal difficulty consisted in finding a vessel fulfilling all the conditions deemed necessary for the successful transport of the ova to their destination at the Antipodes. One vessel only, the "Alfred Hawley," was advertised to sail for Hobart Town about the period suitable for the shipment of the ova, and, although in other respects supposed to be a smart vessel, she was of a tonnage too small to inspire confidence in her making a rapid passage.

With the owners of this ship Mr. Youl entered into and carried on negotiations until it was discovered, in the beginning of January, 1864, that, having only just returned from China, there was no hope of her cargo being discharged, and the preparations necessary for the reception of ova completed, until too late for their shipment during that season. In this emergency Mr. Youl acted with admirable promptitude and decision, which saved the experiment from being shipwrecked and delayed until the following year.

The "Alfred Hawley," and the idea of a direct passage to Hobart Town, were immediately dismissed from his mind, and application made to Messrs. Money Wigram and Sons, the owners of the splendid and well-known clipper ship the "Norfolk," then advertised to sail for Melbourne on the 20th of January, to undertake the conveyance of the salmon ova by that vessel. To this application these gentlemen not only assented with alacrity, but declined to receive any remuneration for the important service which they undertook to perform, desiring only that it might be accepted by the Australasian Colonies as a proof of the interest which they took in the welfare and advancement of these rising communities.

When Messrs. Money Wigram and Sons first intimated their intention of making no charge for the conveyance of the ova by the "Norfolk," Mr. Youl had, in a truly liberal and patriotic spirit, undertaken to pay them one hundred guineas from his own pocket, if they should think fit to receive