

Salmon-ova.—Three shipments of salmon- and trout-ova were received during the year—namely, by the steamers “Kaikoura,” “Doric,” and “Tongariro.” The ova shipped amounted to—

Salmon—					
Scotch	...	...	...	...	610,000
Rhine ...	...	...	...	...	100,000
Trout and char—					
<i>Salmo fontinalis</i>	...	...	...	...	30,000
Alpine char	...	...	...	...	25,000
Lochleven trout	...	...	...	...	40,000
Rhine great lake trout	...	...	...	...	25,000
Rhine brook trout	...	...	...	...	25,000

Full particulars as to the condition of these ova, how distributed, &c., will be found in the correspondence referred to above. Following the lines laid down in last report, the major portion of these ova was sent to the Otago and Southland acclimatisation societies, and it was hoped that these societies would have arranged to have placed all the fry in one river, but it would appear that such arrangements have not as yet been made.

The following is a statement of the cost of the various shipments received, including those received last year:—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
<i>Whitefish, 1886</i> (arrived in bad condition, and were not carried beyond Wellington):—						
Expenses in America	23	1	3	
Expenses in colony (distribution)	39	6	10	
						62 8 1
<i>Whitefish, 1887</i> :—						
Expenses in America	53	14	6	
Attendance	5	0	0	
Distribution in colony	48	8	11	
						107 3 5
<i>Salmon-ova, 1886</i> :—						
Expenses in United Kingdom	142	0	5	
Freight and attendance	84	7	10	
Distribution in colony	39	7	8	
						265 15 11
<i>Salmon- and Trout-ova, 1887</i> :—						
Expenses in United Kingdom	888	13	10	
Freight and attendance	506	4	2	
Distribution in colony	32	5	2	
						1,427 3 2

Seal Fisheries.—Prior to the wreck of the “Kekeno” she was engaged in making trips to the Auckland and Campbell Islands and West Coast Sounds in the interest of protecting these fisheries. After her wreck you arranged that the schooner “Awarua” should make a trip to the Auckland and Campbell Islands for this purpose. The owner of the vessel, Mr. Hatch, gave the use of her, and the Government paid all expenses in connection with the cruise.

On the 1st June last the close season for seals was extended to the 1st June, 1887, when it will have lasted nearly six years.

No positive information has been obtained as to whether any increase has taken place in the number of fur seals during this close season, but I think there can be little doubt that they have increased; but the number was reduced to so few from indiscriminate slaughter that it will necessarily be some time before any appreciable increase can be observed. I append extracts from Mr. Henry W. Elliott's monograph, “The Seal Islands of Alaska,” a most interesting work, and Mr. J. A. Allan's “History of North American Pinnipeds,” books published by the Government of the United States of America on the subject of the protection and value of the seal fisheries, and the number of seals that used to be procured in these waters:—

“*Possibilities for Protection.*—The Falkland Islands offer natural conditions of protection by land far superior to those found on the Pribylov or Commander Groups. They have beautiful harbours, and they lie in the track of commerce—advantages which are not shared by our islands. At Desolation Island perhaps the difficulties are insuperable, on account of the great extent of coast which is practically inaccessible to men and nearly so to the seals; but the Falkland Islands might have been farmed out by the British Government at a trifling outlay and with exceeding good result, for millions upon millions of the fur seals could rest there to-day, as they did a hundred years ago, and be there to-morrow, as our seals do and are in Bering Sea. But the work is done. There is nothing down there now valuable enough to rouse the interest of any Government. Still, a beginning might be made, which possibly forty or fifty years hence would rehabilitate the scourged and desolated breeding-grounds of the South Seas. We are selfish people, however, and look only to the present; and it is, without question, more than likely that, should any such proposition be brought before the British Parliament, it would be so ridiculed and exaggerated by demagogues and ignorant jesters as to cause its speedy suppression; hence, in our opinion, it is not at all likely that the English Government, or any of the other Governments controlling these many islands of the southern ocean which we have named, will ever take a single step in the right direction as far as the encouragement of the fur seal to live and prosper in those regions is concerned. When we look at our northern waters we speedily recognise the fact that between North America and Europe, across the Atlantic and into the Arctic, there is not a single island or islet or stretch of coast that the fur seal could successfully struggle for existence on” (p. 7, “The Seal Islands of Alaska,” by Henry W. Elliott. Washington, 1882.)