

Salmon Fisheries.—It is not proposed to operate the Hakataramea Salmon Hatchery in future years. The property is being disposed of, and equipment is being taken over by the Department of Internal Affairs for trout-hatchery work in the Southern Lakes district.

The Hakataramea Hatchery was instrumental in establishing the quinnat salmon in the Waitaki River, whence it has spread, long since, by natural dispersal to most major rivers on the east coast of the South Island, and in which stocks have for long been maintained by natural reproduction. The Department's attempts over years to broaden the dispersal of salmon by transfers of stock from the hatchery to waters of other provinces have proved substantially abortive. As regards the maintenance of the run in the Waitaki, it is not considered that the hatchery could handle a significant proportion of the total eggs produced, or hatch them at an appreciably lower rate of mortality than occurs in natural spawning. It is therefore considered that, the acclimatization phase of salmon work having concluded, funds, instead of being spent for a problematical benefit at the Waitaki River, could be better spent on fisheries work of more national character.

Eel Fisheries.—Following a recommendation of the former Chief Inspector of Fisheries in 1945, utilization of eels for UNRRA was embarked on this year. UNRRA requires a canned product, and this limits the exploitation to areas where firms have suitable plant available at the right season of the year. Up to 31st March, 1947, approximately 110,000 eels, weighing 288,000 lb., had been taken by one firm in Southland; and operations involving the utilization of migrant eels in the coming autumn at Lake Ellesmere in Canterbury, and also in Westland, are planned by two other firms. The three areas are ones in which survey work had been carried out by, or with the assistance of, this Department in earlier years.

Advisory and Technical Services.—With staff again available, and the body of factual matter arising from research growing, it has been possible to resume the technical and advisory services formerly available to acclimatization societies. A progressive increase and improvement of this service will become possible as the staff overtakes wartime arrears. A major report, dealing particularly with the practical aspects of fisheries management, will be ready for publication in the coming year. This is designed as a "popular" summarization of knowledge arising from research here and abroad and as a critical review of past policies in the light of such knowledge.

FRESH-WATER RESEARCH

During the past year the fresh-water research organization has undergone a complete overhaul, involving increased and reorganized staff and much improved technical facilities.

The appointment of a Senior Research Officer has placed the technical control of research in the hands of an officer who is not burdened with general administrative responsibilities. As a consequence, more attention can be given to the general planning and supervision of the work than was previously possible. The loss of a former biologist on appointment as Senior Fishery Officer (fresh water) was offset by the appointment of two assistant biologists, Messrs A. M. R. Burnet and B. T. Cunningham, who have joined the staff with excellent biological qualifications and are rapidly gaining experience in the special problems and methods of fresh-water fisheries research. In order to increase the output of research results, it is also proposed to free the scientific staff from the purely mechanical work on equipment by the appointment of technical assistants.