



The oysters are picked off the rocks singly or in small clusters, by means of a small double-headed pick—in the use of which the men get wonderfully expert. Each man carries round a kerosene tin which when full is emptied into the sacks.



FILLING THE SACKS, WHICH ARE NUMBERED AND BRANDED WITH THE BROAD ARROW.

Each man is limited to picking three sacks, for which he receives 6 0/6 each.



TAKING THE OYSTERS OFF TO THE RECEIVING CUTTER.



MR. BENNETT EXPLAINING OPERATIONS TO THE CHIEF INSPECTOR.



MR. AYSON INSPECTING THE PICKING.

Mr. L. E. Ayson, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, came up specially from Wellington to get everything in order for this new departure, and was down at Putiki Bay, Waitoke, on the opening day.

FIRST OYSTERS OF THE SEASON—PICKING UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL.

The advent of the season of that popular delicacy, the oyster, has never previously attracted so much attention as it has this year, the reason being that this is the first occasion on which the picking has been done under the supervision of the Government. Last year the price of the succulent bivalve went as high as 25/- per sack, and there was much dissatisfaction among the public. In addition, the indiscriminate picking nearly ruined the beds, as the pickers naturally made as much money as they could without too much consideration for the young oysters. Mr. Bennett, the local inspector, supervised the picking at Waitoke, and Mr. Stephenson was in charge of the Bay of Islands. Twenty-nine pickers who were all specially chosen, gathered 82 sacks, and Russell sent down 11 sacks on the opening day. The oysters are received at the Government depot, Auckland, and sold to anyone who likes to apply at 12 0/6 per sack.