

by unscrupulous neighbours, who, considering such work common property, would reap the benefits of their industry. This, of course, acted as a great drawback upon oyster culture by private individuals, and the time-honoured practice of fishing everywhere, and anywhere, at one's own free will, has prevailed. All the department has done was to see that the inadequate close season was strictly enforced.

The marvellous success which has crowned oyster farming, and private culture especially, in France, England and Holland, has attracted the attention of Canadians, and they begin to realize the advantage of protecting and fostering an industry which, through private care and attention, has been found in the old world to repay handsomely for the labour, attention and outlay bestowed upon it.

#### LICENSING OF OYSTER GROUNDS.

Under section 4 of the Fisheries Act, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is empowered to grant fishery leases or licenses for a period not exceeding nine years; and under section 21, sub-section 4, of the same statute, such leases and licenses can be granted to persons desiring to enter upon the work of planting or forming oyster beds in any of the coastal waters of the Dominion. Acting upon the advice of the Minister of Justice, it was decided to issue licenses to such persons as complied with the requirements of the department, for such areas only upon which no public fishery at present exists. The applicants are required to make their applications on printed forms supplied by the department, the same being accompanied by a plan of survey made by a qualified surveyor on the basis of the admiralty charts. When these requirements have been complied with, the application is referred to the local inspector of fisheries for enquiry and report, and upon such report the department decides whether it is advisable to issue the license or not.

The industry being in its infancy in our country, it was deemed unwise to hamper it with any but a nominal license fee. In Europe, the rental of oyster farms runs high, as much as \$19 or \$20 per acre being paid in Holland, while in France it ranges from 35 to 45 francs per hectare, and as high as the equivalent of \$7.60 an acre on the coasts of Brittany. In England, where the rights of fishery go with the ownership of the land, the practice appears to be to form powerful companies with a large capital, and acquire extensive areas at purchase price in the most desirable localities. In the various States of the American Union much diversity of rentals exists. California disposes of her oyster grounds to the highest bidder, and gives a title in perpetuity. The nominal price was at first \$1.25 per acre, but the demand for choice limits—in San Francisco bay, for instance—became so great that as much as \$100 per acre has been paid for certain areas. New Jersey sells its oyster grounds to the highest bidder every five years, but limits individuals to 10 acres each, and companies to 30 acres. In Georgia a fee of \$1 per acre, charged upon all grounds leased for oyster culture, is appropriated to the support of public schools. Rhode Island leases its oyster areas at \$10 per acre. In Chesapeake bay—the oyster-fishing waters of America *par excellence*—one of the very best grounds, called “The Beach,” rents for from 2 to 5 cents per bushel of output, according to location. In the State of New York no uniform system of rental exists, the control of the fisheries being vested in different corporations and municipalities. Rates vary from 25 cents to \$10 an acre, although the greatest portion of the rents appear to be about \$1 per acre. No one person or firm can hold more than 250 acres, and in certain localities lessees are restricted to three or four acres.