

depletion is, however, ascribed to natural causes rather than to over-fishing—the water being shallow, the accumulation of old shells, and the ice which forms over the beds, is said to have the effect of killing the young oysters. This seems very plausible, but the real facts can only be determined by means of a careful inspection of the bottoms, which it is intended to have made in the spring of 1892 by one of the officers of the fisheries protection cruisers. A careful examination of the grounds will enable the department to determine whether their condition is such as to warrant the expenditure necessary to survey and re-stock them.

*In Nova Scotia.*

Sufficient information is not yet available to admit of any definite action being taken in the direction of the petitions received from various localities in this province, asking for the reservation and planting of oyster beds; but it is expected, if matters progress favourably, that it will be possible to begin operations at these points during the coming season.

*In Prince Edward Island.*

Summerside harbour, once famous for the excellence of its oysters, has greatly deteriorated of late years. It is represented as exceedingly well adapted for the purposes of oyster culture, and with this end in view arrangements have been made for a survey of the grounds and the setting apart of certain areas when operations are begun in the spring.

Petitions have been received from various other localities in the above named province, praying that certain exhausted beds be reserved for artificial culture, but sufficient information has not yet been received to enable the department to take definite action, although it may be possible to begin work on some of them during the coming season.

OYSTER PLANTING.

In re-stocking exhausted beds, it is intended that none but the largest and most carefully selected oysters from Prince Edward Island shall be used, and these will be planted only after careful examination of the bottoms and the removal of deposits of mud, rubbish or débris, likely to interfere with their growth. As these operations will be conducted under the supervision of an expert, whose services the department expects soon to obtain, there seems to be no reason to doubt but that our efforts will meet with that success which has attended similar ventures on the great natural oyster farms of the Chesapeake and other localities in the United States. There, an immense area of waters, which either through improvidence or neglect had hitherto been sterile and worthless, has assumed a condition of natural fecundity and great value; and there is indeed no reason why similar results should not attend our efforts, if proper means and care be adopted.

ADVANTAGES OF CULTIVATION.

Very little attention has hitherto been paid to the improvement or cultivation of oysters by individuals or private companies in Canada. This has been due, not so much to a lack of enterprise on the part of our people, as to the absence of any regular system of leasing or licensing grounds, whereby parties engaging in such undertakings would be secured in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour, and guaranteed against intrusion