

there are several places where oysters may be picked on the bays, creeks and shallows, which, if they are not removed are inevitably lost, as they would perish with the winter's frosts. It must also be borne in mind that the taking up of private areas in the lower provinces for the cultivation of oysters is of very recent date, and that no areas are leased where oysters exist, and persons who take up these areas are not thoroughly acquainted with oyster culture in all its branches, it is only fair to give these pioneers in oyster culture a start that will encourage them to keep it up after they once worked their way into it.

The oyster industry of this Dominion has been purely taking advantage of a natural resource and it has had many things to hinder its success. In the past a great many more small oysters have been destroyed above the high water mark and at the doors of packers' warehouses than have ever been relaid by persons having licensed areas; then, again, mud digging has destroyed many oysters, as well as brood and valuable soil which can never be reclaimed, fishing in close season and through the ice has had also its ill effects; but I am in hopes that with the combined efforts of fishery officers, regulations and leased areas the oyster industry may yet be able to hold its own. It is far preferable for a few barrels of oysters to be transplanted on an area where no oysters exist, and see that they are being watched and cared for than to see heaps of bleached shells piled up on the shore, the cullings and young oysters which were too small for market left to decay.

In allowing persons to take up areas on depleted beds or other grounds they may choose, and stocking them with young and full-grown oysters, it must not be forgotten that these persons have no control whatever over the spat, and may be the means of restocking many natural beds which are in the vicinity of the leased ones, and I consider it of very great importance to grant licensed areas when not interfering with the public fishery.

The demand for oysters is now really greater than the supply, and the greater the number of resources there are in the different localities the better it is for the public generally, through the spat having a larger area to spread itself and strongly advise the encouragement of private culture, as it will eventually be the only means of keeping up and maintaining a supply.

#### OYSTER AREAS OF THE PROVINCES.

The oyster areas of the maritime provinces are numerous, situated, as they are, in the indented bays and rivers of the coast, from Bale des Chaleurs to, and including, the islands of Prince Edward and Cape Breton. Most of these areas have been examined and reported on, as may be seen by referring to the annual reports on oyster culture. There is still a large area of ground to be covered, the Caraquet beds have not been examined, and other areas along the New Brunswick shore; Cape Breton also has some oyster ground which has not yet been gone over; also, the north side of Prince Edward Island. I have just heard from Mr. W. C. Hobkirk, fishery officer for the Island, that an extensive bed of oysters has been discovered at Savage Harbour, about a mile long, and that the oysters caught are good and plentiful, while another is reported in Tracadie, but no particulars have been given. It is also desired that steps should be taken to examine the waters on the Bay of Fundy shores, and make some experiments as to the advisability of forming oyster beds there.

No efforts have ever been made by this department to ascertain whether any deep-water oysters exist in the sea around the coasts. On the north side of Prince Edward Island, with northerly gales of wind, oyster shells are reported to wash ashore, which would lead one to believe that oyster beds do exist outside; the same has also been reported of Buctouche, N.B.

Oysters and scallops are found in the English Channel and North Sea, in depths varying from ten to thirty fathoms water, and there is no reason why oysters should not be found along our own shores, where so many bays and rivers which contain oysters discharge their waters into the gulf.