

TRACADIE, N.S.

On visiting the grounds at the above place, I found that they were clean, and the oysters had grown thicker and larger. I also noticed a slight percentage of dead ones amongst them; this result I attribute chiefly to the rough usage the oyster had received from the time it was caught until relaid, as in nearly every case I noticed the shells of the dead oysters were chipped. They were transplanted while the oysters were growing, the shells being very tender and delicate at the time. The flesh of the oysters was very good, and of a much more salty flavour than those taken from the north-west arm. I was unable to find any trace of this year's spat; that might be on account of the rainy and wet weather that prevailed in this locality during the spatting season, also, to the limited time I was there; as the weather was very wild during my stay, I was unable to make an extensive examination to see if any spat had settled on any other parts of the bay, but, taking everything into consideration, the grounds were in a satisfactory condition.

CLOSING PUBLIC AREAS.

My attention has been called to several public oyster fishing areas which, of late years, have had a decided falling off in the catch; this I attribute chiefly to the over-fishing of these grounds, the demand is now becoming much greater than the supply, and the increase in the number of fishermen who catch oysters is owing principally to the increase in price giving them more energy to work on the beds, even if under more trying circumstances. The consequence is that the beds are now becoming denuded of oysters, and before the oysters have attained a marketable size or age, they are caught and the beds have no time to recover. Fishermen can see this, but cannot prevent it themselves, and it would be advisable, in the interests of the industry, to close down certain areas for a limited time, say, if only for one or two years, it would be found to be of advantage to the fishermen, for when they did commence fishing on an area that had been closed they would have something to catch, as the oysters would be full grown. Clyde River and Long Creek might be reserved alternately each year; then Mill Creek, Johnson's River and Pownall Bay; in fact, many such areas might be closed down on the Island; areas, also, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia might be regulated in the same way, and I am sure if this matter were given serious thought and carried into effect it would give a fresh start to the industry and keep prices in good shape, as there would be something worth sending to market; otherwise, the natural growth of the oyster on public beds is not sufficiently fast to supply the demands which increase each year, and the beds must ultimately collapse, through being overfished.

PRIVATE AREAS.

The safest and most valuable scheme for the preservation of the oyster in the maritime provinces is to encourage private culture. Interest has already awakened, and it is seen that, although in its infancy, it will develop into a large undertaking in the near future, already between 1,100 and 1,200 acres of ground have been taken up in Dominion waters, while other applications have been also made. Men who have launched into this enterprise can see the necessity of continuing the same for the maintenance of the oyster, and when properly managed, it is found to be a profitable industry. Persons in the oyster business, and having a piece of ground, find it invaluable for keeping their stock until they find a firm market: these persons can afford to be more particular in their culling as they can return all immature oysters to their beds; these can lay and develop into larger oysters, giving a profit, if only in the growth alone, where oysters are sold by the measure; it is especially so with those who buy from the ordinary fishermen, when so many small ones are to be found when culling them over for market. On obtaining possession of an area for the purpose of putting it into a state of cultivation, the beds may be stocked by picking or catching small oysters from the ordinary beds; there has been some objection to this, as it is reported to deplete the natural beds, but