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STATEMENT ON INTRODUCTION OF MALPEQUE OYSTERS

by

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## Statement on Introduction of Malpeque Oysters

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Several attempts have been made to introduce Prince Edward Island oysters to British Columbia. Stafford mentions plantings as early as 1896 and in 1911 was able to find survivors of plantings made in 1905 in Hammond bay, Nanoose harbour and Ladysmith harbour. The Crescent Oyster Co. have tried Malpeque oysters in Boundary bay but their efforts have met with only indifferent success. After what they considered a fair trial of different types, they decided upon the importation of Connecticut oysters as the most practicable procedure. I understand that they were influenced in their choice to some extent by the relatively small transportation charge from Connecticut, although they claim also that the Malpeque oysters suffered greater mortality on the beds than the oysters from Connecticut. This greater mortality may have been due to the fact that the trip from Malpeque is longer than that from Connecticut.

In spite of the importations described above, it is doubtful whether any successful breeding of Malpeque oysters has occurred. Stafford states that spawning may occur in July and reports having found eastern oyster larvae in Ladysmith harbour. However neither Stafford or myself have found any locally bred eastern oysters in the places where plantings were made by the government.

At Boundary bay on the other hand, the Connecticut oysters have been breeding irregularly for the past fifteen to twenty years. As I have reported in Bulletin 34, there are several thousand bushels of locally bred eastern oysters in the rivers of this locality.

I have found that the general condition of eastern oysters, (Connecticut imports and river oysters from Crescent) is not nearly as good in Ladysmith

harbour as in Boundary bay. Several lots which I have placed in Ladysmith harbour have soon become thin and watery in appearance and of no market value.

In view of the poor results from previous plantings, it is my opinion that if there are to be further experiments having to do with the introduction of the Prince Edward Island oysters, they should be very carefully planned and not conducted until more complete information is available, concerning the hydrographical conditions of the different coastal waters of British Columbia.

There is also the question of disease among Malpeque oysters. In a discussion with me last year Dr. Needler expressed the opinion that oysters should not be imported from Malpeque for planting elsewhere until sufficiently large quantities of a disease resisting strain have been developed.

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