

three-inch fingerlings planted during October-November. Twenty-three thousand of these fish can safely be carried in the Fisheries Department's transport tank, provided they are transported at night and liberated in the dams before the heat of the day.

The planting of yearlings would conserve the food supply in the dams and give a quicker return, but the high cost of transport, 700 to 1,000 per load, makes it uneconomical.

WHALING

Shore-based whaling activities were further expanded last year when a new company, Australia's fifth coastal whaling station - began operations from Byron Bay, New South Wales, in late July. With the addition of the new company's quota of 120 whales, the permissible catch this season was raised to 2,040 humpback whales. Whalers experienced little difficulty in making continuous kills and were able to keep processing plants at shore stations operating at near capacity during the three months to mid-September, by which date stations at Point Cloates, Babbage Island and Cheynes Beach in Western Australia and Moreton Island in Queensland had all taken their quotas. By the close of the season on 30th October, Byron Bay station had also taken its full quota of whales.

Production.

The quantity of high grade whale oil, whale meal and solubles produced in 1954, together with comparative figures for the two previous seasons, are shown in the following table :-

	1954 (tons)	1953 (tons)	1952 (tons)
Whale Oil	16,667	17,058	15,226
Whale Meal	*	4,750	4,128
Solubles	1,425 (dry)	1,809 (wet)	3,290 (wet)

* not available

The smaller yield of 8.2 tons of oil per whale this

season, as compared with 8.5 and 8.7 tons in the past two seasons, is due largely to the smaller amount of blubber on whales, which this season migrated earlier than usual from southern waters because of the adverse weather in their winter feeding grounds.

The price of whale oil again showed little variation during 1954 and at £76 sterling per ton, f.o.b. Continental ports (£A96 per ton), production for the season was worth approximately £A1,600,000 as compared with £A1,586,000 in 1953. Value of meal and solubles is more difficult to estimate as the value is gauged on an arbitrary ruling price for a particular protein content. During 1954, The Australian Whaling Commission, which is the sole producer of whale solubles, changed over to the dried product to facilitate marketing. Selling at £60 per ton, this has proved an attractive by-product and, with initial difficulties now surmounted, stations at Point Cloates and Moreton Island are to install similar drying plants this year or early in 1956. Whale meal was again sold wholly on the Australian market at approximately £40 per ton.

On present indications, the Fisheries Division of the Department of Commerce & Agriculture places the value of the industry's total output for 1954 at approximately £1,750,000 - the same level as that of the previous year.