

ANNUAL DEPARTMENTAL CONFERENCE

The 1957 conference, which was held in Perth in the rooms of the Civil Service Association of W.A., was officially opened by the Minister for Fisheries (Mr. Kelly) on February 25. It will conclude on March 1.

All members of the field staff, with the exception of the crew of the research vessel "Lancelin", who were preparing for sea, the Relieving Inspector (Mr. A.K. Melsom), who was absent at Broome, and Assistant Inspector David Wright, on National Service, were in attendance at the conference. The Superintendent (Mr. Fraser) presided.

In welcoming the Minister Mr. Fraser said the Department had every reason to be proud of its ministerial head. As a life-long devotee of angling, he had through the years developed a keen interest in commercial as well as sport fishing, and despite the fact that he also carried the important portfolios of Mines and Industrial Development, he had always been able to find time to give the fullest attention and most careful consideration to the problems of the fishing industry. He had recently spent three months or so in the United States and Canada, and while there he had gone out of his way to meet executives of the fishing industry, and to visit some of the more important fishing ports and processing plants.

Mr. Fraser also welcomed to their first conference three new field staff members, Cadet Inspectors R.J. McKay, G.J. Hanley and E. Barker, and two new members of Head Office staff, Messrs A.J. Buchanan and J.McK. Mitchell. He said that these young men, if they decided to make the Fisheries Department their career, would find among the staff a very fine spirit of kindness and co-operation. He himself had found his own job a particularly rewarding and satisfying one, and he hoped the new officers would do the same.

He also referred to the fact that Mr. W. Davidson would retire from the public service in two days' time. The job that Mr. Davidson had done in his 37 years with the Department had, said Mr. Fraser,

been second to none. During the greater part of his career he had been stationed in the Fremantle district. When one considered the problems associated with the Fremantle district, stemming principally from the varied nationalities of the fishermen in that district and a very real language difficulty, the fact that that district was perhaps the best run of all, showed that one had to hand it to "Uncle Bill" for his very fine work. On behalf of the administration he desired to thank Mr. Davidson for his inestimable contribution to the development of the fishing industry of the State.

Mr. Fraser then asked the Minister to open the conference.

Mr. Kelly, in the course of his remarks, said he could not think of any industry in which he had more interest than the fishing industry, which some day, he hoped, would be second to none in the State. He regarded these annual gatherings as being of considerable importance, not only to the administration and the field staff, but also in regard to the development of the industry itself. The opportunity they afforded of exchanging views, outside the conference room as well as around the table, and of hearing reports from the inspectors on developments in the different districts, not to mention the discussions ensuing from talks from Branch Heads in the Department and technical experts from C.S.I.R.O. and elsewhere, had gone a long way towards building up departmental efficiency and, consequently, a well developed industry. In formally declaring the conference open Mr. Kelly said he hoped that the week's deliberations would be harmonious, and that those present would enjoy the social engagements which had been arranged. He regretted that owing to an earlier commitment he would not be able to take part in the annual country v. city cricket match on the following Wednesday.

Apart from those by departmental officers, addresses were given to the conference by Mr. R.W. George and Dr. R.G. Chittleborough, of the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O., Dr. A. Main, of the Department of Zoology, University of Western Australia, and Mr. Athol Middleton, of Perth Technical College, formerly of C.S.I.R.O. Division of Fisheries and Oceanography.