

progress made in the pearl culture industry established at "Kure Bay", Brecknock Harbour, north of Derby, two years ago.

Mr. Baird witnessed the first harvest of round pearls at the grounds last month when 781 shells were opened. The largest pearl weighed $80\frac{1}{4}$ grains and was of very good colour. In addition, nearly 4,000 half pearls have been harvested, 3,540 of which have been sent to Japan for processing and sale.

Better arrangements for the collection of shell, increases in the shell carrying capacity of the station, and improvements in the techniques of planting the nuclei, are expected to raise the value of production considerably during the coming twelve months.

An interesting note on the productivity of the shell has been supplied by Mr. Baird. After the first pearl has been harvested from a shell, a second nucleus is planted in the same shell. When the second pearl has been collected the nucleus for a half pearl is inserted so that each pair of shells may produce two pearls and a half pearl before it is finally taken from the water and cleaned for sale as mother-of-pearl.

It is expected that both the Minister (Mr. Kelly) and the Superintendent (Mr. Fraser) will pay a visit to Kure Bay about the beginning of September.

WHALING

The Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. commenced operations for the humpback season on June 10 with three kills. All were females, the longest being 45'4". The company ceased chasing sperm whales on June 9 (on which day 4 were taken) in order that it could concentrate on humpbacks. Up to that date, 91 sperm whales had been taken since January 1, 1958. By June 30, 32 of its quota of 120 humpbacks had been killed.

On June 22 the Company received a serious setback when the chaser "Kos VII" lost her propeller when searching for whales at Caffin Island, 26 miles east of Albany. Fortunately the Company's second chaser "Cheynes" was in the vicinity and took "Kos VII" in tow. An inspection of the "Kos VII" the following day revealed that the propeller shaft had broken off just aft of the stern gland, but no damage had been done to the rudder or the ship's hull. A new tail shaft will be made locally, but a new propeller will have to be obtained from Brisbane. It is not expected that "Kos VII" will be in commission much before the end of this month.

The Nor'-West Whaling Company commenced humpback whaling on June 16, when two whales were taken - one being a 46' female. Up to June 28, this Company had taken 29 whales, according to reports from Assistant Inspector D. Wright. Only three of them had been males. This predominance of females in the catch is usual during the early part of the season.

All whales taken by both Companies were said to be in good condition.