

WHALING

Up to the week ending September 20, the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company had taken a total of 82 humpback whales for the season. For twentytwo days in August, neither of the Company's chasers secured any humpbacks but, in the last few days of that month, five humpbacks were taken, including a large female on August 30. Although this whale was not of remarkable length (46'2") with a calf 12'3", the oil produced from it, 113 barrels, was a record for the Station and the whale also yielded 3 tons 5 cwt. of meal. The total number of sperm whales taken by this Company since January 1, was 154 to the week ending September 20. In August and September, 5 sperm whales over 50' were taken. They were all males, the largest being 52'6". It was taken on August 9, and yielded 62 barrels of oil and 22 tons of meal. The best oil yield from a sperm whale for the period was 68 barrels from a male measuring 49'1".

A comparatively rare species of whale was sighted in King George's Sound close to the Station on August 20. It was a Southern Right Whale, estimated to be about 40' long. The species are said to be slow-moving and lethargic and, in keeping with this, the specimen sighted lay motionless in the water for a considerable time. The species was almost exterminated in the early days of hunting as, due to their habits, they were easy prey for whalers, but they are now closely protected.

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The take of whales at the Nor'-West Whaling Company's Station at Carnarvon has lagged well behind that of last year. To September 20, a total of 799 whales, all humpbacks, had been taken, whereas last year the Company had completed its quota of 1,000 by that date. From a preliminary survey of the returns, it would appear that the average length of the whales taken at Carnarvon this year and the production of oil per whale, have both declined

slightly. However, by comparison with last year, the ratio of males to females has improved. In the total of 791 taken so far, 409 were males and 382 females. For the week ended August 31, 1957, when a total of 789 whales had been taken, 351 were males and 438 females. It must be remembered, however, that females dominate the catch earlier in the season while males are far more abundant towards the end of the season. The increase in the ratio of males to females, therefore, is possibly only the result of the delay in filling this year's quota.

From a recently published financial report of this Company's operations for the year ended March 31, 1958, it is obvious it is in a very sound position indeed. Although the net profit showed a slight decrease over that of the previous year, it was apparently entirely due to an increase in general expenses brought about by writing off book assets of the Company's old Point Cloates Station. Even allowing for this, net profit for the year's operations - £261,455 - is exceedingly good for a company whose paid up capital is only £270,000. The dividend remained at a steady 30%. The report continued that the mortgage with the Commonwealth for the purchase of the Babbage Island Station had been reduced from £307,000 to £100,000, but at the annual meeting the Chairman (Mr. H.H. Wheatley) announced that the last £100,000 had also been paid - 8 months before it was due. He revealed that the purchase price of the Babbage Island Station had been met entirely from profits without disturbing the dividend rate. He added that, by maintaining the most modern plant possible, the Company hoped to be able to continue to operate profitably.