

Referring to the publicity campaign being conducted to increase the demand for pearlshell in the United States, Mr. Adermann said that the first reports were most encouraging. It now appeared likely that the extensive publicity would offset the effect on the pearlshell industry of the improved quality and greater use of plastic buttons.

INTERNATIONAL WHALING CONFERENCE

On June 22, the conference of the seventeen-nation International Whaling Convention will open in London. Australia will be represented by the Commonwealth Director of Fisheries (Mr. F.F. Anderson). A pre-convention conference of representatives of Norway, Britain, the Netherlands and Japan failed to agree on the Antarctic whaling quotas, according to a recent press report. The Director of the Japanese Fisheries Board, Mr. Hidio Okuhara, who acted as chairman of the conference, emphasised, however, that it laid the foundation for later discussions on the future of Antarctic whaling. Japan had been opposed in principle, he stated, to the quota system, but had agreed to further discussions in the hope that a solution might be reached which would stabilise whaling operations in the Antarctic.

According to Japanese press reports, their delegates proposed an allocation of quotas on the basis of the actual catches during the past one or two years. This would have given the Japanese fleets a quota of between 4,900 and 5,000 whales. The Norwegian delegates, on the other hand, suggested that the quotas should be based on a five-year average catch. This would have resulted in a quota of 4,000 to Japan and 5,000 to Norway.

Mr. Okuhara said that the Soviet Union would be invited to attend a further pre-convention meeting to be held in London.

IRRUPTION OF CATTLE EGRETS

A telephone message on May 11 from Mr. C.E. Gibbs, of Wanneroo, was the first advice the Department received of the re-appearance of cattle egrets in the South-West. Later it was learned that the Government Entomologist, Mr. C.F.H. Jenkins, had observed fourteen in a herd of cattle in the Wanneroo district during the previous week. Reports of further sightings in the metropolitan area appeared in the press; thanks to advice from Mr. G.B. Harris, of Midland, three birds were observed among cattle in Whiteman's quarry yards. Other birds were photographed at Osborne Park and various correspondents reported their presence as far south as Nyabing and Bremer Bay. The belief that the birds occasionally seen in the metropolitan area were the progeny of cattle egrets introduced into the Kimberleys in 1933, has been discarded. It was now thought that their occasional appearances are due to natural migrations and that they are, at times, quite common in the Kimberleys.