

WHALING

Writing from Albany, Inspector B.A. Carmichael advised on August 22, that the Cheyne Beach Whaling Company had decided to cease whale-chasing for a period of two weeks. Up to that time the Company had taken 165 whales, 78 were males and 87 females, and including 6 blue whales. As a blue whale counts as $2\frac{1}{2}$ humpbacks, the Company had caught the equivalent of 174 humpbacks. They thus needed two humpbacks to fill this year's extended quota. The Company hoped, Mr. Carmichael said, that two would be taken shortly after resuming operations. In any case the Company would continue to operate on sperm whales (of which it has taken 11 this season) until it became uneconomical to operate.

The Nor'West Whaling Company, up to August 31, had taken a total of 477 whales, including 6 blue whales, 1 fin whale and 1 sperm whale. As at the Albany station, females predominated in the catch (251 compared with 226 males), but this was not unusual for that part of the season. The average length, however, of approximately 38ft. 9in., was much lower than that of recent years, and was a rather disturbing sign.

TURTLES

Two local firms this year have sent trial shipments of frozen turtle meat overseas. In February six cases, totalling 732 lb., and in August eight cases, totalling 916 lb., were sent to importers in London and Hamburg. It is understood that one company considered the re-action to the February consignment was not encouraging. Although reports on the reception of the August shipments are not yet to hand, it may reasonably be assumed that there will be a solid demand if the price and quality are right.

The flesh of the green turtle (the genus Chelonia is common on our north-west coast) has been a valued dietary item in many parts of the world for more than a thousand years. Indeed Pliny, the Roman naturalist and author, mentioned it in his writings during the first century. It appears to have been first introduced into England as an article of food about two hundred years ago, for the "Gentleman's Magazine", in its issue of August 31, 1753, refers to it as a rarity.