

crayfish bait brought into Australia. This was a successful conclusion to the representations towards this end which the Minister, the Department and the crayfishing industry had been making for some time.

Mr. A. Ciccerello, whose Fremantle firm handles a large percentage of the State's crayfish bait, said that the industry would benefit considerably from the lifting of the duty. He said that it should help to eliminate shortages of bait which had caused so much trouble to crayfishermen in recent years and would allow supplies at competitive prices to be imported from overseas. Last year several hundred tons of salmon heads were brought in from the United States and Canada, while cod heads were obtained from the United Kingdom. Fish heads had also been imported from Hong Kong. Orders for supplies for the new season, which will commence in November, have already been placed.

WHALING.

The precarious position of the humpback whaling industry in Western Australia was referred to at the meeting of the International Whaling Commission last June.

Australia was represented at the Commission's meeting by Mr. J. V. Moroney of the Department of Primary Industry, Canberra. He was accompanied by Dr. G. L. Kesteven, Assistant Chief of the Division of Fisheries and Oceanography, C.S.I.R.O., as scientific adviser; Mr. R. Crichton-Brown, Chairman, Australian Association of Whaling Companies; and Mr. F. F. Anderson, representing the Australasian Whaling Association. The Australian delegation persuaded the Committee that a reduction of whaling should be effected in the Antarctic before quotas of the Western Australian stations were reduced.

The Commission, satisfied that the Zone 4 stocks could not sustain the whaling which had taken place in both Antarctic and Western Australian waters, decided to set up a working party in Rome to review all the available data. A more realistic survey of the condition of the stocks should be obtained from further studies of the information available. Additionally, three specialists in population dynamics were appointed as a Committee to report to the Commission on the magnitude of the stocks and the management measures which would maintain the highest level of sustainable yield. It is hoped that the Antarctic catch limit will be brought into line with scientific findings not later than July, 1964.

The Commission was told that the condition of the stocks off the east coast of Australia was less precarious, but the information available required careful analysis to avoid the disaster which had occurred in the exploitation of the west coast. The condition of the stocks of fin and blue whales exploited in the Antarctic appeared to correspond in many ways with that of the humpback stocks.

Progressive Local Catches.

At the Nor'-West Whaling Company's station at Carnarvon, a total of 162 humpbacks had been caught by July 23. This was very close to last year's figure of 156 humpbacks to July 23.

In 1957, the last year in which 1,000 whales were taken, over 376 had been secured by July 23.

Writing from Carnarvon on July 6, Whaling Inspector D. H. Smith reported that the company was then working only one team of flensers. No flensing was being carried out during the night shift.

At Albany, the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company had captured 100 humpbacks and two blue whales by the end of July. This was less than the previous year when, to the same date, 134 humpbacks and 6 blue whales had been captured. However, it exceeded the 1958 catch-rate for, in that year, only 76 humpbacks were taken in the same period.

Inspector B. A. Carmichael, in forwarding this information, said that it appeared that the quota would be filled only if good weather prevailed.

Blue Whales for Scientific Research.

The Director of the Fisheries Division, Department of Primary Industry (Mr. C. G. Setter), recently advised that permission has been granted for the taking of a number of blue whales for scientific research. An application by Dr. G. L. Kesteven, of C.S.I.R.O., for permission to take blue whales had been granted by the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr. Adermann.

Three will be taken by the company at Carnarvon and three by the Albany firm. Arrangements concerning the taking of the whales and the collection of the required biological material will be made by C.S.I.R.O. The whales will not be counted in the quotas of the Companies concerned.