

7½ per cent and foresaw better times for the company through the development of the prawning industry in which it expects to play a leading role.

The directors also revealed that the sperm whaling trials had been disappointing and that only 26 had been taken. Contrariwise, the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company, at Albany, has been able to develop sperm whaling on a profitable basis and last month announced the purchase of two modern whale-chasers to replace existing vessels. The new chasers were acquired from a Queensland company which recently ceased operations. They are sister ships and are reported to be more powerful and faster than the present chasers. It is understood that they operated in the Antarctic before they were acquired by the Queensland concern.

MANX KANGAROOS?

No, not a new species, but two reports have come to hand of kangaroos without tails.

The first note on such an occurrence came from the Government factotum at Onslow, Mr A.H. Clark. He wrote that the animal he had seen was a red (in colour, not political propensity) boomer of above average size. It was with several other kangaroos, all of which made off with good speed when first approached. Except that it hopped rather more erectly than the others, it did not seem to be handicapped by the loss of its tail. It was also able to sit upright - also very erectly. Mr Clark had 5 witnesses so there is no doubting his veracity, but they were unable to approach closer than 70 yards of the animal. Consequently, it was not possible to observe whether there was any scar.

When this report was sent to Dr Shelley Barker, of the Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, he recounted a similar observation. A few months before receiving our letter he had visited a local farm which had a semi-tame colony of grey kangaroos. One of them, he wrote, was an old doe that had been on the farm for about 17 years. She could be easily recognised by her tail, or the lack of one. It had apparently been shot off many years ago. She could hop quite fast and jump fences without difficulty. Dr Barker commented that, just like Mr Clark's animal, she adopted a very upright stance when she hopped. She died last July, he added, of natural causes and when her skull was compared with others from similar kangaroos of known age, it was estimated that she must have been 20 years old at death.

Mr Clark, after giving us the details of his de-

tailed red, went on to say that when discussing the observation with some local men, one stated that he had recently shot a kangaroo near Meekatharra that had only a few inches of tail. Another report, from a source which Mr Clark valued as a good authority, mentioned the shooting of an hermaphrodite kangaroo that had both a pouch and male organs. A section of the skin was reported to have been brought into town but Mr Clark had not seen it.