

DEPARTMENT TAKES OVER AT PEMBERTON

The Department of Fisheries and Fauna took over control of the Pemberton Trout Hatchery on January 1 this year, and wishes to place on record its deep appreciation of the voluntary efforts of the retiring members of the Trout Hatchery Board, Mr Ralph Kelly, Mr Roy Kelly, Mr Hubert Jay and Mr Gaston Todd. In assuming control, the Department is fully aware of the debt of gratitude owed to the voluntary efforts of all concerned with the development of the Hatchery over the past forty-odd years.

The original introduction of trout into Western Australian waters was the result of tremendous enthusiasm and painstaking work by one man. In 1930, Mr C. A. Glew, a Pemberton schoolmaster, established a small plant in his back yard and arranged for a consignment of ova from Victoria. These ova arrived in poor condition having taken 13 days to reach Pemberton. But the following year 20,000 ova were air-freighted and arrived with minimal mortality taking only 80 hours for the journey. Nearly 15,000 trout fry were subsequently liberated over an area of 180 square miles. Over the next few years many specimens of fish were brought in from local streams. They included perch, mullet and native species, but nothing that looked like a trout turned up until 1936, when a large fish was reported in a pool in East Brook. This proved to be an 11½ lb. brown trout.

In 1935 the Fish and Game Society was formed in Perth; £500 was raised by public subscription and a grant of £500 was received from the Government. With this money an experimental hatchery and ponds were built at Pemberton. Financial and administrative difficulties almost caused the failure of the scheme, but in 1938 Mr Ralph Kelly formed the Pemberton Society, and with unlimited enthusiasm and hours of arduous voluntary labour, kept the hatchery going through the war years. Financial support increased and in 1945 the Government approved and financed the appointment of a full-time attendant, Mr J. Simpson, as Curator and Fisheries Inspector.

With Government support assured the Hatchery flourished, but its whole history from conception to the present date has been a monument to voluntary effort and community spirit. The Hatchery and the sport fishing it creates are enormous tourist attractions, bringing well-earned returns to the people of Pemberton.

The Department considers the future function of the Hatchery to be threefold:

- (1) To provide fish for display in relation to tourist activities.
- (2) To provide fish for sale and for distribution in suitable streams throughout the state.
- (3) To provide facilities for research into freshwater species (including marron).

Dr N. Morrissy of the Waterman Marine Research Laboratory is currently carrying out research on trout and marron, and will act as technical advisor to the Hatchery.

The new Manager of the Hatchery is Mr G. Cassells, who was previously Assistant Manager under the Hatchery Board.