

(No. 105A.)



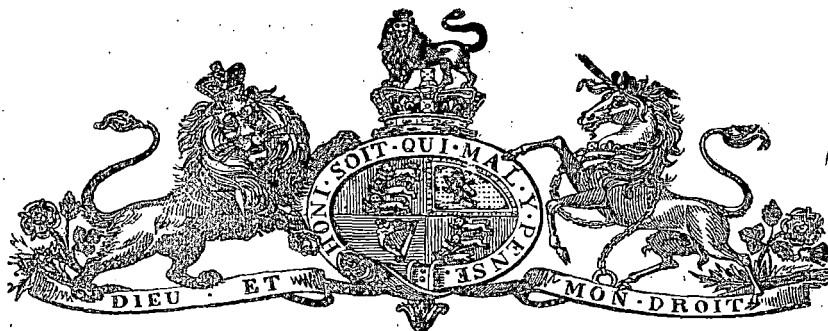
1888.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

FISHERIES OF TASMANIA:

REPORT BY SIR THOMAS BRADY, AND REMARKS THEREON
BY MR. W. SAVILLE-KENT, INSPECTOR OF FISHERIES.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



Government House, 2nd June, 1888.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to be in receipt of your letter of the 30th ult., and, in compliance with your request, have much pleasure in giving you my observations and suggestions respecting the Fisheries of your Colony.

I have inspected principally the Derwent, its estuaries and some of its tributaries, and the South Esk partly, and intend, should nothing unforeseen arise to prevent it, visiting some of the rivers on the North and North-West Coast.

The Derwent ought, in my opinion, to be as good a salmon producing river as any in Ireland. Its waters and estuary are not second to our best river, the Shannon, in Ireland, from which hundreds of thousands of salmon are annually exported to England. The character of its upper waters is eminently adapted for the production of fish; and I have not much fear in the theories of the sea around the Island being of too high a temperature, and swarming with enemies. We have to encounter the latter in Ireland, in probably as formidable shapes as here, and, so far as the destruction of the salmon fry when entering the sea from the rivers, perhaps much greater. Similar observations are applicable to the South Esk.

Suitability of the Derwent for Salmon.

South Esk ditto.

From what I have seen, and the information I have obtained from various sources in several localities, I consider the Fisheries of Tasmania are worked in such a primitive and desultory form, that they are not at all developed, nor to such an extent as might be done to the great advantage of the public interests; and that, in fact, their value is little known.

Fisheries of Tasmania not properly worked.

It is manifest to me that very little, if anything, is known as to the Salmon Fisheries, or the quantity of such fish that may be in the rivers. One hears of the capture of an English salmon here and there, and sometimes of several having been taken by nets, but really all is vague—nothing definite is known, nor are any modes of fishing adopted to ascertain what quantity may be in the rivers.

Ignorance as to what extent Salmon exist in Tasmanian waters.

With regard to the Eel Fisheries, the only information obtained is that eel fry are seen ascending the rivers in spring in countless numbers; and yet, not a single engine suitable for the capture of eels when migrating to the sea is used. If it be the fact, as stated to me, with regard to the quantity of fry ascending, there is no reason to doubt that there must be a great exodus of full grown eels to the sea when they arrive at maturity in the upper waters.

Eel fisheries of great value.

Salmon and eels are the converse of each other. The former ascends the rivers for the purpose of reproduction, and their fry descend to the sea, where they receive all their strength and development, and grow into salmon. The latter descend to the sea to propagate their species, and the fry ascend the rivers, where, in the upper waters, they receive their development, and become large eels. Nature has thus ordained that both fisheries may exist in the same river, and may be carried on without detriment to each other.

Salmon and eel fishing do not interfere with each other.

Eel fishing,
value of.

In Ireland the eel fisheries in many places are almost as valuable as the salmon fisheries. I remember 120 tons of eels having been taken in one river in Ireland in one night. At the present prices in England this would represent a money value of about £10,000.

Sea fisheries
not properly
worked.

The sea fisheries, again, appear to me, so far as I have seen, not to be worked with energy, nor with improved modes of capture such as are adopted in other countries, while some most injurious descriptions of nets are used.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out the advantages to be derived by any country from the full development of its fisheries. Scotland is an example of what may be effected by proper and judicious modes of administration and encouragement. So also Canada and America, where the fisheries are fostered and developed by State aid to a very large extent, to the great advantage of their coast population; while, with regard to its salmon and eel fisheries, Ireland has shown an example worthy of being followed, both these classes of fisheries having reached an enormous commercial value; while there are few countries that will afford better sport to the salmon angler than Ireland.

I cannot see anything in the waters of Tasmania to prevent corresponding advantages being realised.

Government
should expend
money in order
to develop
fisheries.

This, however, cannot be accomplished without the judicious expenditure of money, any more than it could be expected wealth should accumulate without the expenditure of capital. It is for the interests of the public and not of any private individual that some expenditure of money should be made by the Government to develop a source of wealth which may, perhaps, attain large proportions, and from which the public, the fishermen, and the whole community (so extensive are the ramifications of a fish trade industry) must derive the greatest benefit.

Fisheries Com-
missioners
should have
power to
expend money
to ascertain
value of each
kind of
fishery.
How money
should be
expended.

Considering the whole circumstances of the fisheries of the Colony, I am strongly of opinion that a sum of money should be voted by Parliament to enable the Commissioners to carry out such experiments as are absolutely necessary, in the first instance, to ascertain and determine the value of each description of fish inhabiting the waters of Tasmania, in the following manner:

That fishing weirs, similar to those used in Ireland and Scotland, should be erected in the Rivers Derwent and Huon, and perhaps other rivers, in accordance with the suggestions I have already made in another report to the Commissioners of Fisheries. By this means all salmon ascending the rivers can be captured without injury, and returned into the rivers above the weirs; a register of every fish, with its description, character, quality, estimated weight, &c. being kept, from which not only an estimate of the value of the Salmon Fisheries, but correct data from which the proper seasons for opening and closing salmon rivers may be determined, can be obtained.

Eels may be
taken when
descending
rivers.

By certain additions to such weirs, which I have also pointed out in my Report to the Commissioners, appliances may be fixed for eel fishing during the autumn and winter months, and all the eels captured may be turned to profitable account. It will do no injury to either fisheries to capture all the eels descending; and if the statements made to me as to the quantity of eel fry seen ascending the rivers be correct, the produce from the sale of the eels caught may be large, and should be applied by the Commissioners towards defraying the expenses of any experiments, and of the Commission generally.

I have in my report to the Commissioners of Fisheries entered fully into the details of the experiments that should be carried on for at least three or four years, and the improved modes of capturing fish generally that might be introduced, and without which I believe no reliable data can be arrived at. The experiments will not be costly; the erection of the fishing weirs will not require engineering skill, providing proper appliances will be attended with a comparatively trifling cost, and the number of persons to be employed need only be few, while the important results that may be derived from success in any one class of fishing may be more than can be estimated.

Eel fisheries
might be
rented, and an
export trade
developed.

Should the eel fishing be a success, not the slightest doubt that large rents might be obtained from private individuals for the right of eel fishing if the Government choose to let such rights, as there are ready markets for eels, which could be transported to the neighbouring colonies without any risk and with little expense, requiring neither water nor ice to keep them alive till they reach the market, but simply careful packing in boxes, it being ascertained that eels will travel safely in this way for 40 hours.

If the experiments in salmon fishing proved successful, the Government might then take into consideration the question of letting the exclusive rights of fishing for them in tidal waters by all engines save rods; though I would prefer that the public fishermen should be encouraged to fish for them legitimately in such places, paying for the privilege a licence duty, to be fixed by the Commissioners.

Salmon fishing with nets by public fishermen under licence.

Excepting salmon, all the fish captured in the manner I have suggested to the Commissioners might be sold, and the produce applied towards defraying expenses. If successful, the public fishermen would soon follow the example, and the experiments need not then be further proceeded with.

Unless these recommendations are carried out, I cannot see how the fisheries can be developed to the extent to which they may be capable, nor the information which it is absolutely necessary to obtain can be ascertained.

For this purpose, Parliament should vote a sum of at least £500. I think this amount would probably be sufficient for the present.

Parliamentary vote for at least £500.

The Oyster Fisheries.

Having been invited by Mr. Saville Kent to inspect the Oyster Fisheries at Spring Bay, I had much pleasure in doing so, but had only time to make an inspection of one of the Government reserves, the first to which I was brought by the local agent or inspector in that locality.

I found that the system adopted was to bring from other beds where the oysters were plentiful a good supply of oysters, which were placed in what are called in France "ambulances," and that fascines and slates, &c., coated with cement, were used for spat collectors. This system obtained for some years in France, and was, for some time, successful in collecting spat, and a good deal has been caught in this way in Spring Bay. These ambulances are useful for the small oysters, when carefully detached from the collectors; but for the large, or brood oysters, they are not well adapted. Above all things to ensure success, it is absolutely necessary that the beds and collectors should be kept perfectly clean, the collectors being only placed as soon before the spatting season as practicable, so that as little sediment and dirt as possible might be accumulated.

System adopted at Spring Bay not adapted for large or "brood" oysters.

The bed, and all the collectors, and everything connected with it which I inspected, were very dirty, and in a most unsatisfactory state, and would be unfit for any successful oyster cultivation. The spat, or young oysters, were also allowed to remain on the shells and fascines, instead of being carefully removed and parked on beds, or placed in ambulances, where they would be protected, and might grow to be of good shape, which is important. Government reserves are of great consequence for restocking exhausted beds; but it is useless, in my mind, maintaining them in any place where they cannot be kept clean and free from vermin. They should be kept only where there will be as small a deposit of dirt or weed as possible, and the young oysters should be carefully removed from all shells, oysters, or collectors, and parked out according to their different ages or sizes, and sold to those persons who are cultivating oysters on private beds, or concessions granted to them.

Everything very dirty.

Young oysters not removed from the "collectors."

Government reserves valuable; but only if properly attended to, and in suitable situations.

Had I been aware that there were Government reserves in other places, I would have made every exertion to inspect them. This, however, might now be done by some person under the direction of the Commissioners.

I recommend that the whole of the fisheries of Tasmania, embracing sea, salmon, trout, eel, and other fresh-water fish, the oyster and other shell-fish, should be placed under the management of one Board, who should be responsible only to Parliament; that a sufficient sum of money should be voted by Parliament in addition to the revenue to be derived from licence duty and other matters to defray expenses; that this Board should have power to make such By-laws, Rules, and Regulations, in addition to those specially enacted by Act of Parliament, as may from time to time become necessary; to employ such persons, with the sanction of the Chief Secretary, as may be necessary for the protection of salmon and trout, above all things during the spawning season, which is all important; and to carry out such experiments as I have suggested; and that all Acts now in force should be consolidated and amended in such a form as to meet the requirements of the case.

All fisheries to be placed under one Board, responsible to Parliament. Money to be provided. Board to have power to make rules, regulations, and by-laws. All fishery Acts to be consolidated.

The importance of leaving to a Department, constituted specially for the purpose, either from the qualifications of its members, or the knowledge of experts to be employed by it, the settlement of every question relating to every branch of the fisheries, cannot be overrated.

Two heads
undesirable.

Having the charge of one branch of the fisheries in the hands of one Department, and of another branch in the hands of another Department, is bad in principle, and should be avoided.

I have drafted a Bill to consolidate and amend the Fishing Laws of Tasmania, and have submitted it for the consideration of the Commissioners of Fisheries. It embraces the principal practical amendments in the present laws which may be useful, and simplifies their administration.

Should it meet with your approval, I take the liberty of strongly recommending its adoption by Parliament.

Public fish
market de-
sirable, and
statistics re-
garding fish
caught should
be kept.

I would further recommend that a public fish market should be established at Hobart, and that accurate statistics concerning the fish caught should be kept.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient faithful Servant,

THOMAS F. BRADY.

The Hon. P. O. Fysh, Premier of Tasmania.

Brisbane, Queensland, 25th August, 1888.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to return you Sir Thomas Brady's recent communication concerning the condition and development of the Tasmanian Fisheries, accompanied, at your request, with such remarks thereon as appear desirable, and which I have limited to the subject of oyster culture.

In consequence of the adverse comments contained in this communication upon the system of oyster culture adopted by me in the Government Reserves, and upon their condition generally, I have considered it requisite to make an enquiry into the exact extent and circumstances of Sir Thomas Brady's investigations of the Reserves reported on. As the result of such inquiry I find it incumbent upon me to express my regret that Sir Thomas Brady's remarks are based on a remarkably brief and superficial acquaintance with the subject dealt with, and which acquaintance I am compelled to characterise as altogether inadequate for the purpose of forming a correct estimate of the condition and prospects of the Tasmanian oyster fisheries. On receiving intelligence of Sir Thomas Brady's arrival in Hobart, I wrote to him from Melbourne telling him how pleased I should be for him to make an inspection of the Government Oyster Reserves, mentioning more especially those of the Spring Bay district. I at the same time wrote to the local overseer, Mr. Joseph M'Cluskey, instructing him to afford Sir Thomas every possible facility for seeing everything of importance on the Reserves.

Mr. M'Cluskey has since informed me that Sir Thomas Brady was able to spare a short period, of less than an hour's duration only, to the inspection of the Reserves in the course of one morning on his way from Maria Island to catch the mid-day coach at Spring Bay, and that he actually only visited a single Government bed. I further find that this single bed visited was the particular one in charge of Wm. Tapner, concerning which there is a disputed claim as to the amount of work executed and stock placed upon it, and pending the settlement of which all further operations are practically suspended. It is, furthermore, the bed indirectly referred to at page 3 of my Report of 1st June, 1888,* as the one whose stock and material I proposed to entirely remove during the coming year, and to utilise for the formation and equipment of Reserves at other stations. Such

* The object primarily aimed at being thus practically accomplished in this particular district,—i.e., the resuscitation of the natural beds, and the extensive establishment of scientifically cultivated private fisheries,—I propose, during the ensuing year, to utilise the stock and appliances from one of the Government Reserves at Spring Bay towards the formation and equipment of similar Reserves on other suitable stations on the coast line.—*Report, 1 June, 1888.*

removal, I may explain, I had previously decided on, in consequence of the yearly increasing accumulation of sedimentary deposits within its limits, and which necessitates an inordinate amount of labour to keep it clean. The bed, I may further remark, was primarily taken up for experimental purposes, in consequence of its being already staked off and having a small stock of oysters on it, the original occupant, Mr. Wm. Tapner, receiving adequate compensation for it.

After examining this bed, and just before starting by the coach, Mr. M'Clusky informs me that specimens of collectors from other reserves with attached oyster-brood were brought in and shown to Sir Thomas Brady, who on the spot admitted the success of the system, and that the future prospects of oyster culture in the bay were very promising; as much in fact he also admitted to me personally in an interview I had with him at the Fisheries Office, Melbourne, where I showed him much additional material and evidence illustrating the methods and results of my system of cultivation.

Respecting Sir Thomas Brady's assertion that the system of cultivating oysters on frames is obsolete and not adapted for the culture of the larger or brood oysters, I can most unhesitatingly affirm that the practical experience of the past two or three years has demonstrated that—whatever may have been the result of experiments with analagous appliances in British and other European seas—they are eminently adapted for cultivating such oysters in Australian waters. The advantages connected with frame culture, as proved by my own practical experience, are as follows:—Firstly, the oysters grow very much more rapidly under such conditions, which is a substantial commercial gain. Secondly, being also covered in with split-paling collectors, the oysters are effectually protected from the attacks of various enemies. While, thirdly, the frame system permits of the occupation of ground for the purposes of oyster culture which would otherwise be useless. In this connection I may refer to the fact that I have just concluded an inspection of the Moreton Bay—Queensland—oyster beds, which are immensely productive, and are at the present time the main source of supply to the Melbourne market. The Directorate of one Company here,—which alone has stock and plant valued at £30,000 dispersed among upwards of 100 oyster beds—is so satisfied with the demonstrated results of the frame and collector system that it has determined upon introducing it in their beds, and anticipates by such a step to more than double the area they will be able to place under cultivation and the number of oysters propagated.

Among other circumstances that appear to me to have given Sir Thomas Brady an unfavourable bias with reference to the employment of frames and collectors, are the facts related by him to me that a very large amount of capital has been expended in Ireland in connection with the employment of closely analogous appliances, which resulted in a total failure, no spat or brood whatever being obtained as a return on the outlay. Secondly, I have to remark that Sir Thomas Brady was accompanied to the one Government reserve and other private beds at Spring Bay and Maria Island by Wm. Tapner, who has for some time past, on personal grounds, been strongly prejudiced against my employment of frames, and who has to my knowledge endeavoured to communicate this prejudice to other cultivators. As you are aware, I have been at issue with Wm. Tapner as to the amount of oysters, in excess of his instructions, he asserts he has laid upon the beds. The frames introduced by me afford a ready check as to the approximate number on the beds, each frame holding about 500 adult oysters. Being dissatisfied with his account of the number supplied, I recently examined the frames and found a very much less number had been placed upon them, and necessarily had my misgivings as to the correctness of Tapner's assertions. He explained, by way of excuse, that the majority of oysters—contrary to my instructions—had been laid on the ground in deep water, where, of course, they could not be counted; the doubt consequently remained, accompanied subsequently, on Tapner's part, by an openly expressed opposition to frame culture.

The superficial and consequently imperfect comprehension of the circumstances and conditions of Australian oyster culture, and of the special operations initiated under my supervision in Tasmania, acquired by Sir Thomas Brady within the brief interval he gave to the subject, is made apparent in his communication. The fact that oysters in the warmer Tasmanian waters may produce spat at all times of the year, as attested to in my several reports, was, I am informed, entirely discredited by him until ocular demonstration of the fact was submitted to him at Spring Bay. This same circumstance is also made apparent in his written recommendation that collectors should only be placed in the beds immediately before the spatting season, and which is in fact perennial, though most abundant in the summer months. Sir Thomas Brady would appear also to have misunderstood the objects and *raison d'être* of the Government oyster reserves, as shown in his finding fault with the oysters being grown so thickly together, and little or no labour having been yet devoted to their sorting into sizes and to their special culture for the market. My one object in the establishment of the reserves during the several years

they have been placed in my charge has been the most rapid and abundant possible propagation of the oysters placed in them, with the view of restocking the surrounding waters. With this object in view, the crowding of oysters together as closely as is compatible with their healthy growth brings about the best results. The special culture of oysters for the market has to follow on their successful propagation, and is more a matter for private cultivators. I may, at the same time, refer you to the following paragraph in my Report before referred to:—

Now that the problem of cultivating oysters in favourable localities in Tasmanian waters in such manner as to secure a large amount of the spat, and to obtain an abundant increase in the stock originally laid down, may be said to be fairly solved, attention may be directed to the special preparation of the mollusk for consumption. From the millions of young oysters now collectively existing on the Government Reserves, the natural beds, and the private fisheries on the eastern coast line, it may be anticipated that in from between two and three years' time there will be a sufficient supply to allow of a certain quantity being placed on the market, and thenceforward in increasing ratio. The oyster, however, in its crude state, as taken off the beds, is not in a condition to compete favourably with the imported varieties. As is the case with the English representative of the same species, it requires special manipulation and culture to develop it into that deep, smooth-shelled, and finely flavoured type known as the English "native," and which at the present date commands so high a price as from 3s. 6d. to 4s. per dozen. There is every reason to believe that the Tasmanian variety might be "artificially developed" to the same standard of excellence, and, as such, would occupy a first rank in the oyster markets of the antipodes. Towards the accomplishment of this object, I propose to initiate some special operations during the forthcoming year, and the results of which I shall hope to embody in my next Report.

Showing that, having now solved the question of their abundant propagation, I propose to devote attention to the special preparation of the oysters for the market. These special operations I had contemplated initiating early in the coming year, but they will not now fall within my province to originate.

It simply remains for me, in conclusion, to indicate that the most substantial evidence of the partial success of the system of oyster propagation that I have been entrusted with the honor of inaugurating on behalf of the Government within the past few years is afforded by the facts that the entire area of Spring Bay is getting stocked with a natural growth of oysters derived from the breeding stock laid on the reserves, while every suitable portion of the same bay is being rapidly taken up for the purpose of artificial oyster culture by applicants who are convinced of the success of the system introduced.

I may finally refer to the specimens and apparatus illustrative of the same system of oyster culture exhibited by me in the Fisheries Court of the Melbourne Exhibition, as affording the most incontrovertible ocular demonstration of the practical results that have been, and are still being accomplished.

Trusting that I have acquitted myself to your satisfaction of the somewhat anomalous task that has been imposed upon me,

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

W. SAVILLE-KENT, *F.L.S.*, &c.

To the Honorable the Chief Secretary.

(In continuation of Paper No. 105A.)

Hobart, 18th December, 1888.

SIR,

REFERRING you to Parliamentary Paper, 1888, No. 105A, I have the honor to enclose Sir Thomas Brady's comments upon Mr. Saville-Kent's letter of 25th August last.

Sir Thomas Brady's communication was received this morning, and I have to request that, as an act of fairness to that gentleman, it may have publicity. It will be necessary to publish the paragraphs of Mr. Kent's letter to which Sir Thomas Brady replies, in order that the matter may be intelligible to the public.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

MATTHEW SEAL, *Chairman Fisheries Board.*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

Sir Thomas Brady's Observations on Mr. W. Saville-Kent's Letter, dated Brisbane, Queensland, 25th August, 1888, to the Hon. the Chief Secretary, Tasmania, in reference to Sir Thomas Brady's Report of the 2nd June, 1888, to the Hon. the Premier of Tasmania on the Oyster Fisheries of Spring Bay.

Mr. Saville-Kent has assumed here that I made an estimate of the condition and prospects of the Tasmanian Oyster Fisheries. If reference be made to my Report it will be found that I did nothing of the kind. I could not have done so, for my inspection and my knowledge of any Government Reserves in Tasmania were limited to Spring Bay. This was the only place which Mr. Saville-Kent requested me to inspect. I have stated in my Report that had I been aware there were Government Reserves in other places I would have made every exertion to inspect them. Par. 1.

It was only by accident when going down the estuary of the Derwent to pay a visit shortly before my departure from Tasmania that, observing some stakes in a cove, I learned there were Government Reserves there. I then had neither time, opportunity, nor means to inspect these.

The local overseer (M^cCluskey) brought me to the bed I inspected. I placed myself entirely in his hands, desiring him to bring me to the best Government bed. A few minutes' inspection would have been quite ample for any practical man to have come to the same conclusion at which I arrived. It did not require even as much time as I gave to it. I asked the overseer (M^cCluskey) if the other beds in that locality were cultivated on the same principle and in the same manner, and having been answered in the affirmative I considered it would have been only waste of time, even if I could have afforded it, to make further inspection. Par. 3.

I knew nothing of Mr. Saville-Kent's intentions as mentioned in this paragraph, and I dealt only with the facts as I found them, which are virtually admitted here by Mr. Saville-Kent.

The specimens of oysters brought for my inspection from other places were on both cultch and artificial collectors. They were pronounced by me to be very good, and such as I had seen in France. I, however, never admitted that it was proof of the success of the system, or that the future prospects in the bay were very promising. Par. 4.

I did speak of the future prospects of a private bed which I inspected, and which I was informed was the property of Signor Bernacchi, if cultivated as I suggested.

At the interview I had with Mr. Saville-Kent in Melbourne, I admitted the collection of oysters on the collectors was very good, but did not speak of the system, which was not at all new, having seen it in full operation many years ago in France and Ireland.

Mr. Saville-Kent, I perceive, refers to it as *his system of cultivation*. I regret so distinguished a man should have taken credit to himself for that which is due to France. The system is old, and emanated from France.

Par. 6.

A man of the name of Tapner was in the same boat with me along with the local overseer (M^r. Cluskey) and several others when I inspected the two beds referred to—viz., the one Government reserve, and the one private bed; but he was not with me, as stated, on Maria Island or anywhere else. It is hardly necessary for me to say that neither Tapner nor anyone else could in any way have prejudiced me, and it is only fair to Tapner to state that nothing I heard him say was calculated to bias me against the operations then being proceeded with. I will not comment on the observations made by Mr. Saville-Kent in this paragraph further than simply saying that, as it was on my authority he had been sent out from England to Tasmania to fill the position of Inspector of Fisheries, my prejudices, if I had any, would naturally have been all in his favour, for my own character's sake.

I, however, was asked by the Government to perform a duty—I expected it would have been a pleasant one—and was forced, most reluctantly, to make it a very unpleasant one, when I was obliged to state the facts recorded in my report. These facts have not been gainsaid in Mr. Saville-Kent's report.

THOMAS F. BRADY.
5th November, 1888.

201, Macquarie-street, 8th January, 1889.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to enclose you my observations on the communication received from Sir Thomas Brady with relation to his recent Report on the Oyster Fisheries of this Colony and my reply thereto.

The Chairman of the Fisheries Board having taken upon himself the responsibility of making public Sir Thomas's communication without affording me the opportunity of a reply or comment on it, I have, in my private capacity, and in justice to myself, placed a copy of the enclosed observations at the disposal of the public press.

I have, &c.

W. SAVILLE-KENT.

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

8th January, 1889.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of Sir Thomas Brady's observations on my letter dated 25th August, addressed to you in reference to his, Sir Thomas Brady's, Report of June 2nd, so far as it relates to the Oyster Fisheries of Tasmania.

I am glad on perusing this communication to find that I was wrong in assuming that Sir Thomas Brady had made an estimate, from his inspection of the one reserve visited by him, of the condition and prospects of the Tasmanian oyster fisheries in their entirety, more especially as the reserve visited, as explained in my previous communication, was one upon which all work had for some time been suspended preliminary to its abandonment, and the transport of the stock and appliances on it to other reserves, since effected.

Sir Thomas's adverse criticism is thus, by his own admission, narrowed down to the condition in which he found the one reserve that he could spare time to visit. Had he, as invited to, and as was anticipated by the overseer, inspected the reserves also on the opposite side of the bay, he would have found no ground for a like complaint as to their neglected state. And since he admits in his last communication, par. 4, that he pronounced the oysters artificially bred on collectors and cultch in these unvisited reserves, and subsequently brought to him, as being "very good," I could scarcely desire a more favourable verdict.

In paragraph 1 of his communication, Sir Thomas Brady quotes from his previous Report, "had I been aware there were Government reserves in other places I would have made every exertion to inspect them." This statement on Sir Thomas Brady's part carries with it the admission of his being likewise unaware of the existence, or at any rate of the contents, of the Annual Reports connected with the Fisheries Department. I have had the honor to prepare for presentation to Parliament during the past few years. Page 11 of that for the years 1886-87 is set apart for a clearly printed enumeration of the Government oyster reserves and private oyster fisheries established up to date throughout Tasmania. Presumably, in my absence from the Colony, the Authorities

under whose auspices Sir Thomas Brady made his investigations and reports failed to furnish him with the documentary evidence accessible and essential towards assisting him in arriving at a correct estimate of the extent and developmental capacities of the Tasmanian fisheries.

The fact, again, appears to have escaped Sir Thomas Brady's memory that in a letter dated April 30th (copy enclosed), the Overseer of the Spring Bay District, Mr. Joseph M'Cluskey, acting on my instructions from Melbourne, wrote to Sir Thomas Brady placing his services at his disposal, not only to show him over the several reserves at Spring Bay but those also of Little Swanport, and undertaking to provide all boats, conveyances, and men in attendance that might be required. The reserves at Swanwick River, Great Swanport, being also under the control of the same district overseer, Sir Thomas Brady would have experienced every facility in extending his investigations further afield had he so desired.

Spring Bay and Little Swanport alone are, in my opinion, capable, under skilled artificial cultivation, of producing, as in former days, oysters sufficient to supply not only the Tasmanian but neighbouring colonial markets; and the Government reserves and numerous flourishing private beds whose establishment I have had the honor of initiating in these districts are already yielding a substantial earnest of what may be anticipated from them after a few more years' perseverance with the operations now in progress. A more exhaustive investigation of the Government and private oyster fisheries of these two districts would, I anticipate, have profitably occupied all the little leisure, as subsequently demonstrated, that Sir Thomas Brady could bestow upon this subject. It was on this account that I drew his attention more particularly to the East Coast district, presuming at the same time that through the possession of the published Parliamentary documents before referred to he would be cognisant of the localities in which other reserves were established did he wish to visit them.

The reserve at Little Oyster Cove referred to in Sir Thomas's report is not one from which he would have derived much profitable information. Conditions, brought about by both natural and human agencies, have greatly altered the pre-existing state under which oysters formerly flourished here. The entire bay is, moreover, gradually silting up, and while some few spots are left on which oysters, with a considerable expenditure of labour, can be made to grow, the experience of the past few years has indicated that this is not, as compared with the East Coast, a locality in which oysters can be profitably cultivated. Full information on this subject will be embodied in my final Parliamentary report now in course of preparation. I may mention here, however, that so long since as February last I decided upon, and apprised the caretaker in charge of the desirability of, removing the reserve to the opposite side of Little Oyster Cove, and suspended all operations upon it involving expenditure until sufficient means were at disposal for carrying out the alteration indicated. As the result of my latest inspection of this district, about a week since, I do not feel justified—unless abundant funds are to spare—in recommending the further maintenance of reserves in this locality, and, as a commercial investment, am advising private growers in the adjoining cove to transport their oyster stock to a more reproductive area on the East Coast.

I observe that, in paragraph 4, Sir Thomas Brady assumes that I take to myself the credit of being the inventor of the system of oyster culture introduced by me on the various Government reserves and private fisheries of this Colony. I most emphatically repudiate any such assumption. In my earliest official reports, and on all occasions of sufficient import, I allude to the system as identical with that introduced by M. Coste on the French Coast, and who, as a matter of fact, derived his ideas from the similar method of oyster culture observed by him, and that had been in operation in Lake Fusaro in Italy from the time of the ancient Romans. In conjunction with that system, I have improvised such forms of spat collectors as have recommended themselves to me as being most cheaply and easily constructed in this quarter of the world. Certain of these, I am fully aware, are so distinct in character from those hitherto employed that, were I so minded, I might secure a patent for them. They have, however, been placed unreservedly at the disposal of the public, and it has been a sufficient satisfaction to me to have had the honor of inaugurating with their association the earliest successful application of the French system of oyster culture in Australian waters.

In his concluding paragraph Sir Thomas Brady states that I having been sent out from England on his authority to fill the position of Inspector of Fisheries to the Colony of Tasmania, his prejudices, if he had any, would have been in my favour. As a stranger, recommended to him by Professor Huxley as a suitable nominee for the appointment, I am thus far indebted to him. The circumstances under which Sir Thomas has recently investigated and reported upon the fisheries of this Colony have, however

unfortunately been such as to militate against any such favourable predilections. Brought out and introduced to these fisheries under the auspices of the Association, to whom my appointment, in the capacity secured to me, was most distasteful, I anticipated none, and would have been surprised at the exercise of any prejudice in my favour. Added to this, I have had the misfortune to be professionally at issue with Sir Thomas Brady and, for several years past, with Members of the above Association, upon the question of the acclimatisation of the English salmon in Tasmanian waters, and upon which subject it is, with much regret, that I cannot, on the eve of bidding farewell to the Colony, find ground for conscientiously altering my opinion.

Deploing the circumstances that, in justice to myself, render these observations necessary,

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. SAVILLE-KENT, *F.L.S., F.Z.S.*,
201, *Macquarie-street, Hobart.*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

Spring Bay, 30th April, 1888.

SIR,

I HAVE just been instructed by Mr. Saville-Kent, that if you wish to visit the oyster breeding reserves here, I was to show them to you, and drive you up if you could spare the time to see those at Little Swanport.

I will be very glad to do so, and will make all arrangements as to boats, conveyance, and men in attendance, if you wish to visit them; but in order that everything should be ready and no hitch occur, I would like to know in advance the time or date of your intended visit. There are only two days that I could not spare in next month—viz., Monday, the 7th, and Monday, the 14th proximo.

I have, &c.

JOSEPH MCCLUSKEY.

To SIR THOMAS BRADY.

Chief Secretary's Office, Hobart, 17th January, 1889.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, enclosing Sir Thomas Brady's comments upon Mr. Saville Kent's letter of the 25th August last, and requesting that, as an act of fairness to that gentleman, it may have publicity.

In reply, I have to state that your request would have been promptly complied with, but as an equal act of fairness to Mr. Saville Kent, who had been absent from the Colony, the publication was delayed, so far as the Government are concerned, to enable that gentleman to peruse Sir Thomas Brady's communication, and to make any observations thereon he might desire to offer.

Having now received Mr. Kent's reply, copy of which as published in the columns of the *Mercury* I enclose, the correspondence will be laid upon the Tables of the Houses of Parliament and printed in continuation of Paper No. 105A.

I have, &c.

P. O. FYSH.

The Chairman of the Fisheries Board.