

Spencer and Superintendent Clark were to the effect that the trays should be examined only in a temperature of less than 35°, and each egg having a white spot on it should be removed. The dead eggs were those of a yellowish colour, which were easily recognized; and careful hands quickly removed them with tweezers. The temperature of the quarters in which the work had to be done was not at all pleasant, but it is believed the labour, which occupied nearly three and a half hours, was successfully performed. The eggs were repacked, and are now in the icehouse, from which they will be taken this afternoon just prior to the departure of the steamer for the colonies. Mr. Buckland ordered two tons of ice sent on board the steamer for the purpose of having every precaution taken to insure the safe transit of the eggs, and the officers of the steamer will pay particular attention to the freight, so that the eggs may arrive in good condition. This is the third attempt to send fresh eggs to the Australian Colonies; and the former failures were occasioned only by negligence in transportation after they had been discharged from the steamer at the Australian ports. This consignment is under the particular direction of Sir Julius Vogel, and from the very careful arrangements made it is to be hoped the eggs will arrive at Auckland in good condition.

No. 9.

The Hon. the COMMISSIONER of TRADE and CUSTOMS to the AGENT for New Zealand Government, San Francisco.

(Telegram.)

WHITEFISH ova arrived putrid. Believe neglected on board.

Wellington, 12th March, 1886.

VOGEL.

No. 10.

Mr. S. C. FARR to the Hon. the COLONIAL TREASURER.

SIR,—

Wellington, 12th March, 1886.

I have the honour to report and comment upon the recent shipment of whitefish ova forwarded by the United States Fish Commission, Washington, and shipped at San Francisco for the New Zealand Government by Mr. Buckland on board the Royal mail steamer "Alameda."

Telegram dated the 15th February, 1886, stated that "twenty boxes" of ova had been shipped; but there was no statement of the number they contained—it might have meant thousands or millions, as boxes vary in size according to the packer's opinion. I mention this because of the difficulty in allotting numbers to suit the capacity of our respective New Zealand hatcheries; and I venture to suggest that when it is intended to import ova it should be a request to those forwarding it to furnish an approximate of the numbers sent or the capacity of the compartments in which it is packed. Either would be simple, and facilitate the distribution so long as there are a number of societies to share in the importations; but if a central establishment could be arranged for, these details would, of course, be unnecessary.

As desired and arranged for by you, I left Christchurch for Auckland on the 23rd February—travelling by the steamer "Hawea" to Wellington, thence by the steamer "Hinemoa" to Manukau Harbour—to await the arrival of the mail-steamer, which came alongside the wharf in Auckland on the 7th March, at 9 a.m. I at once went on board and inquired for the ova. After waiting for some little time the cook was sent to me, who at once informed me that he had had a great deal of trouble with the package. I inquired what had caused the trouble. He replied it was by being compelled to move it about and repack in ice, after taking the meat out from time to time. He then took me to a chamber on deck, the door of which he opened, and pointed to a package which could be clearly seen among carcasses of meat (ship's stores) and blocks of ice. From what I saw and smelt I said to Mr. Parker (who had been appointed by Mr. Hill, the Customs collector, to render what aid was necessary in the transshipping), "It is my opinion that it is worthless; but we always hope for the best in such matters until the worst is revealed."

I may here state the exact position I found the package in—which was a series of frames (not boxes) 18in. square and about 1in. thick, resting one upon another, and secured together with narrow battens; on one side of each frame was tacked a piece of calico, upon which the ova was placed, and over it white scrim; the frame was then filled in with moss. Perfect packing so far; but, instead of its being placed in an insulated case, as it should have been, it was resting upon something at the bottom of the chamber anything but level, close to the outer side, next an alley-way. On the other side rested a large block of ice, on the top of a smaller piece. The side opposite the door was quite exposed; so that two sides only were in contact with ice. If this apparent neglect had been the only cause for complaint some little hope of success might have been indulged in; but the offensive gas arising from melting ice amid stale meat necessarily permeating the whole package was sufficient to dispel all hope, and crush the ardour of the most sanguine and enthusiastic pisciculturist. I gave the cook the customary bonus for his trouble, but not so large a sum as I should have done if it had been well cared for. He said he had carried out the only instructions he had received—"to keep plenty of ice about them."

That some person is to blame there can be no doubt. To prove which is only to imagine the package of ova placed in a house on deck with an alley-way one side, through which, on the voyage in the tropics, a current of continuous hot air must necessarily pass, causing premature hatching, followed by foul decomposition. This would apply to any kind of ova, but more especially to the delicate ova of the whitefish.

The package was immediately conveyed by the Customs launch to a van placed at my disposal by the railway manager, packed in ice, and then taken to the wharf at Manukau by a special train, and at once put on board the steamer "Stella." We left Manukau and crossed the bar at 4 p.m.