

July 1, 1903, the entire issue therefore being taken by the State as outlined in my former Report, the total holdings in said Funds being \$2,347,751.90, of which \$1,886,587 is in bonds of the State.

OYSTER FUND.

In Statement "H" is shown in detail the operations on account of this Fund. The balance brought down from the previous year was \$37,820.42, which, added to the receipts during the fiscal year of \$59,655.17, aggregates \$97,475.59, with disbursements of \$63,657.39, leaving a balance on hand September 30, 1903, of \$33,818.20.

While this balance is apparently satisfactory, yet the receipts accruing to this Fund since the close of the fiscal year, show a heavy shrinkage, especially from licenses to dredge for oysters, as will be seen by the following table:

Years.	No. issued.	Amounts.
1902	838	\$40,960.08
1903	609	28,416.49
1904	371	19,172.81

Most of these licenses are issued early in the season—September and October—and the number given for the fiscal year 1904 as 371, virtually embraces the entire issue for that season.

While said statement shows disbursements of \$63,657.39, yet it is proper to state that of this amount \$14,075.75 was expended for repairs, largely occasioned by improvements upon the steamer Governor Thomas, which economy imperatively demanded, and which will not enter so largely into next year's expenses.

STATE DEBT.

The funded debt of the State is clearly shown in Statement "J", aggregating \$7,101,926.13, or an increase over the year previous of \$200,000, less \$7,400 of the 3 per cent Exchange Loan of 1889 maturing during the year and therefore redeemed. While the *gross* debt shows an increase, yet by reason of investments for the sinking funds during the year, the *net* debt of \$2,616,704.23, is less by \$180,564.90 than the year previous.