

prosperity of the oystermen of the State, by providing effective machinery for the substantial enforcement of the cull law, which is one of the vital principles of the preservation of our oysters.

The Commander of the State Fishery Force and his deputies have rigidly enforced the law.

Under the former law the Oyster Fund became involved, and an appropriation of \$35,000 was required from the State Treasury to pay the bills then due and payable. Under the successful system of taxation inaugurated by the present statute and as administered by the Fishery Force, the Oyster Navy is made entirely independent of financial aid from the State Treasury for its maintenance, and in fact a surplus has been accumulated to its credit. Whilst some friction was apparent at first in collecting the said tax it is now generally recognized by all the oyster dealers and packers, as it was from the beginning by the more progressive dealers, that the tax is fair, certain of collection and easily borne.

The immediate result of the thorough enforcement of the cull law has been to increase the catch of marketable oysters. The supply of oysters on the Maryland oyster grounds generally is reported by the Commander of the Oyster Navy to be greater this year than for many previous seasons.

This is not true, however, of the Potomac River, where the citizens of Maryland and Virginia enjoy equal privileges in theory. The unfortunate jealousy existing between the oystermen of the two States, and the "catch as catch can" policy pursued by both has tended to disorganize the business in that section.

Violators of the law must be taken to Virginia or Maryland, as the culprit may chance to be a Virginian or a Marylander, for punishment when apprehended. The difference in the vigor with which the laws of the respective states are enforced added to the greater severity of punishment imposed by our own State statute still further tends to paralyze the industry there. In short, a Virginia oysterman can afford to break the law, be fined as he must be under the Virginia Act, dispose of his cargo and make money; but