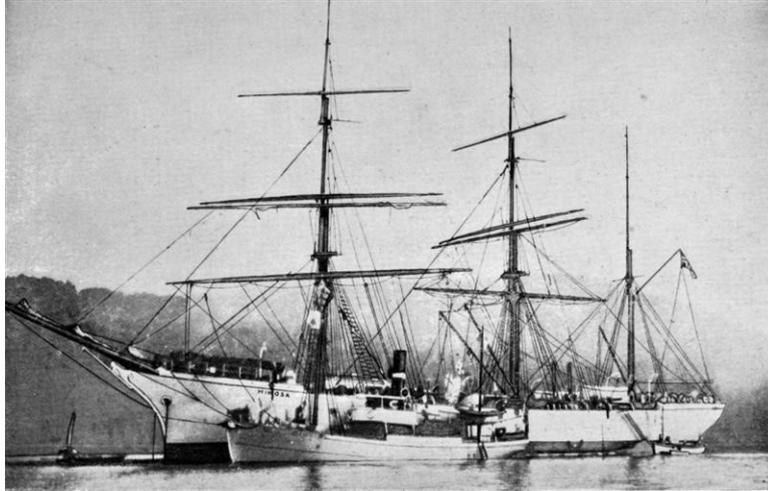


## Interest felt at surprise arrival of Norwegian whalers



*The revival of the whaling industry in New Zealand: two vessels of the Norwegian whaling fleet in Paterson's Inlet, Stewart Island. They are the barque Mimosa, used as a factory and the steam tender Hobart. - Otago Witness, 22.5.1912.*

For some time past a whaling fleet, the property of a Norwegian firm, Dannevig and Co., of Sandfiord, had been expected; yet some amount of surprise and considerable interest was felt on their unannounced arrival in New Zealand waters on Sunday evening at Paterson's Inlet, Stewart Island.

The outfit consists of a steam tender, the Hobart, used for actual capture and towing purposes, and the Mimosa, or "factory", a necessary accompaniment for boiling operations and storing oil and provisions and equipment. There are also two small motor launches. The Hobart, a vessel of 44 tons, was built in Sandfiord in 1909.

Her crew consists of 10 qualified men, under Captain Nielsen.

The Mimosa is a much larger ship, a barque of 1250 tons, and is worked by a competent staff of 24 men, under the command of Captain Dedricksen. She is an old boat, and was originally built in England for use there as a sailing vessel, but was subsequently sold to Norwegian purchasers, who modified her into a whaling factory.

Most of the crew of both ships are married men, and are paid from 2 5s upwards per week. To judge from appearances they are strong and hearty seamen, well fitted for the undertaking they have in hand, and likely to attain what success may be due to natural acumen. They all speak good working English.

With a view to trying their fortune in our waters, the representatives of the New Zealand Whaling Company, as this Norwegian firm is now called, left their native coasts on October 22 last. They had an uneventful voyage, stopping to coal at several English ports, and also at Port Said, Colombo, Aden, Penang, Fremantle and Hobart. The whalers made few captures until they reached Tasmanian waters.

While the factory was lying in Port Davey, the Hobart went out on a cruise, and the party was rewarded with what was considered a fairly good catch in the shape of 13 sperm whales and one Hamburg. These sperm averaged 45ft in length. In size, therefore, they were not exceptional by any means. The adult males often reach a total length of 60ft. Even that does not represent the greatest possible dimensions of the whale, the longest being the "blue" whale, which has been

known to attain an elongation of 100ft.

The sperm was hunted with great ardour during the earlier half of the 19th century, and has greatly diminished in numbers in consequence.

It is supposed to be commonest in tropical and sub-tropical seas, especially towards the south, and it is absent from both Polar regions. But a capture of 13 sperm whales is nothing to despise. There is, as we know, a high commercial value put upon the oil of this fish. It does not readily become rancid or gummy, and is thus an excellent lubricant.

Over and above this, there may be a good yield of ambergris, the curious concretion formed within the intestine of the whale, and also found sometimes on the surface of the waters haunted by the sperm, and used as a basis in perfumery. The teeth of this whale, too, furnish valuable ivory.

The *Mimosa* is capacitated for the carriage of 7000 caskets of oil. The oil actually obtained will be taken to England and Germany, whose markets offer but little choice, the price commanded being very much the same in both countries. The "factory" made its headquarters at Paterson's Inlet, Stewart Island, while the *Hobart* visited Bluff to make arrangements for its work.

It is intended that whaling operations shall be tried about the coast of Stewart Island. Thereafter the party will return to Tasmania, off the coast of which they have been labouring for the past six months. - ODT, 11.5.1912..