

Whether it was the idea of travel or whether he had been inspired by his visits to the southern New South Wales bark mills during his holidays, he had made up his mind even before leaving school that he would work in his father's company.

Among his first jobs at CM was decoding cables. Soon he was organising shipping, visiting the wharves, collecting shipping receipts and picking up bills of lading. Long hours were expected of employees, and it was not uncommon for the young Mostyn to be in the office till 8 or 9 p.m., particularly if ships were loading and documents had to be delivered to the bank. This was important as the company did not have a lot of spare cash in those days, and if it could bank its money a day or two before having to pay a supplier, it could use it to finance its business.

Early in 1949, Bob Mostyn made a preliminary visit to Tasmania to assess the feasibility of exporting fruit from there. In August, only about eight months after joining the company, he moved down to the Apple Isle permanently and opened a branch in Hobart. In the following month CM was registered as a foreign company not only in Tasmania but also in Queensland, where J.W. Peden was its agent.

Also in 1949, Russ Fretwell, who by then had done a stint in the Export Department, was seconded to the Melbourne office for most of that year to learn about fruit (apples, pears, oranges and grapes) and tallow under Ross Easdown. He returned to the Wine and Spirits Department in Sydney to work under Eric Bramley.

Bob Harrison, too, was on the move during the late 1940s. On returning from Melbourne he did a spell in the Adelaide office in 1947 handling citrus shipments under Harry Nicholas. He returned to Sydney for a brief period before moving to Adelaide as Nicholas's assistant in 1948. He stayed there for four years.

A new phase in CM's history opened in 1949 with the company's first shipment of rock lobster tails. Harrison, Nicholas and, of course, RL (ever the driving force behind the company's expansion) were instrumental in exploiting the export potential of this industry.

In 1947-48 the processing of the rock lobster for its tail, a meaty luxury much prized in the United States, had been the basis of a growing industry in South and Western Australia. In 1948, Wilbur-Ellis Company, an aggressive San Francisco import-export firm, sent out Chet Magnuson, one of its junior executives, to explore the possibilities of expanding its overseas interests. Wilbur-Ellis specialised in trading in fishery products such as fish meal, fish oil and canned and frozen seafood.

While Chet Magnuson was in Australia, he called in at 29 Reiby Place to meet RL, who for many years had known members of Connell



RL became so interested in exporting rock lobster tails that he flew to Perth and bought up all the available stock under the guidance of Penn Boucat, a vigorous entrepreneur. On his return to Sydney, he heard that the British pound had just been devalued, giving a considerable boost to exporters. He was on a good wicket.

An agreement was subsequently reached with Romilly Harry to work from the fishing port of Robe in South Australia, and sources of supply were arranged in Geraldton, the closest port to the rich rock lobster grounds of the Houtman Abrolhos, a ragged chain of islands and reefs 60 km off the coast.

The vigorous spadework resulted in the shipment of 423 cases of fresh-frozen lobster tails (mainly from the Geraldton area) to New York on the *Pioneer Gulf* on 13 October 1949. Two months later, on 8 December, Harrison was on hand to supervise the loading of a further 136 cases into the *Pioneer Glen* at Fremantle. The *Pioneer Star* took on the first Robe tails in Adelaide and Melbourne in February the following year.

RL was one of the first to realise that the rock lobster industry could survive and flourish only if it was vigorously regulated in all its stages. CM pushed for and eventually helped to install controls on catches to prevent overfishing. The company was also involved in the establishment of the fishermen's co-operatives (in Geraldton and Fremantle) that benefited not only fishermen but also exporters. In the long run it would play an important part in making the industry financially stable, paying advances against catches and sharing some of the rewards at the end of the season's trading. This was on top of helping boat-owners refit their vessels in the off-season. Robe, Beachport, Kingston and Port Macdonnell were to become important rock lobster centres in South Australia, while in Tasmania CM would encourage the industry at Strahan, on the island's west coast, and Stanley, on the north-west coast. But on the day of the first shipment of tails, all that lay in the future.

CM was registering trademarks regularly through the late 1940s and early 1950s. The world-renowned "Cock" brand, covering fruit and vegetables, was registered in 1947 and "Triple Crystal", for stearic acid (the commonest of the fatty acids derived from tallow, used in soap and candle manufacture), in 1949. In 1952 CM appointed agents in New Zealand to register all its trademarks there.

In the early 1950s, largely as a result of the unsettled conditions brought about by the Korean War (1950-53), certain commodities boomed. Tallow was one of them. Prices reached an all-time high and the company pulled out all stops to meet demand and take advantage of the situation. The wine and spirits trade was expanding