

## Notes from the Reports of Public Analysts

*The Editor would be glad to receive the Annual or other Reports of Public Analysts containing matter of special interest to the Society. Notes made from such Reports would be submitted to the Publication Committee.*

### CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

#### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITY ANALYST FOR THE YEAR 1932

THE total number of samples analysed during the year was 6036, of which 5029 were submitted under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, representing a purchase of 500 samples per 100,000 of population. Of the samples of food and drugs, 221 were returned as incorrect. There were 2638 samples of milk, of which 171 were adulterated.

**FREEZING POINT OF MILK.**—The original Hortvet method is the only one used in the laboratory. In order to give the vendor of a milk the benefit of any possible doubt, the figure — 0.530° C. is always used as the basis for the calculation of the percentage of added water.

**CREAM AND STERILISED CREAM.**—Thirty samples of fresh cream in cuplets or jars and 14 of tinned sterilised cream were examined. The fat-content of the fresh cream varied from 30.5 per cent. to 64 per cent., with an average of 52 per cent. The sample containing 30.5 per cent. had the words "Thick Rich Cream" printed on the carton. Since rich cream, as shown by the average above, should contain at least 50 per cent. of fat, this was a false label, and the vendor was cautioned. Apart from this sample, the lowest fat-content of the fresh cream samples was 43.5 per cent.

The amount of fat in the samples of tinned cream varied from 19.5 per cent. to 28 per cent., with an average of 23.5 per cent.

It will be noticed that, as usual, the amount of fat in the sterilised tinned cream was, on the average, less than half that contained in fresh cream. Unfortunately, while the percentage of fat is usually stated on a tin of sterilised cream, there is no such statement given on a carton of fresh cream, so that the purchaser is unable to compare the quality of the two articles.

One sample contained 24 per cent. of fat, and the label bore the words "A highly concentrated and rich cream." This was a false label, since rich cream should contain at least 50 per cent. of fat, and the packers were cautioned (see also ANALYST, 1933, 224).

**LABELLING OF MINERAL WATERS.**—A sample, made in the usual way from essences, had a label describing it as "Orange and Kola." A picture of oranges and kola nuts also appeared on the label, the implication being that the product was made directly from these two articles. There was no justification whatever for this, and the bottlers were cautioned.

**TEA "WITHOUT TANNIN."**—Fourteen samples of tea were examined, and one of these, according to the label, contained no stalk and no crude tannin. The amount of stalk present was about 2 per cent., which was quite reasonably in accordance with the label, but tannin was present to the extent of about 15 per cent. When this fact was pointed out to the packers they agreed to withdraw the reference to tannin.

Since 1929 six different brands of tea, all having references on the labels to the absence of tannin, have been examined, and in each case the packers have, on their attention being called to the fact that the tea contained tannin in about the same amount as any other tea, agreed to omit any reference to tannin on the label (*cf.* ANALYST, 1933, 400).

**"ACID" VINEGAR.**—A sample, described as "acid" vinegar, bore a label stating that it was pure acetic acid of about 60 per cent. strength, and, further, that one table-spoonful would make about half-a-pint of table vinegar on dilution with water. Analysis showed that it was practically pure acetic acid of 34 per cent. strength, and not 60 per cent. as stated. The diluted product, made according to the directions given, would contain only about 1·7 per cent. of acetic acid; and even if the sample had contained 60 per cent. of acetic acid, the strength of the diluted article would have been only 3 per cent. Apart from this, table vinegar should be malt vinegar, and not merely a diluted solution of acetic acid. The vendor stated that the article was intended for sale during the Passover celebrations, malt vinegar not being allowed. They agreed to withdraw the label.

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(See also Quarterly Reports, ANALYST, 1932, 57, 519; 1933, 33, 224.)

### GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS

#### REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ANALYST FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1932

DURING the year under review 3183 samples were taken under the Prevention of Adulteration Act, and of these, 1123 were adulterated. The principal samples were 469 of tea (56 adulterated), 87 of butter (32 adulterated), and 612 of gingelly oil (158 adulterated). There has been a definite increase in the fines inflicted, following comments made in the last Annual Report (ANALYST, 1933, 35), but in several municipalities the fines are still very much too low to have any real deterrent effect. The percentage of adulteration has fallen, but this figure should not be interpreted as meaning that less adulterated food is sold.

**DECLARATION OF ADULTERATION.**—During the earlier part of the year food vendors in Madras discovered that they were immune from prosecution if, when they sold a sample, they made a verbal declaration that it was adulterated. This difficulty has been got over in two ways. New rules under the Act were issued in September 1932, and in connection with ghee containing other fat in admixture, it is now obligatory on vendors to label it with a printed label in the prescribed form showing the composition of the mixture. In the absence of such a label, a verbal declaration is now no defence. Further, verbal declarations are usually made only to inspectors, who unavoidably become known in their districts. This has been met in Madras City by the employment, by the inspectors, of agents, who are frequently changed, to purchase their samples. Outside Madras City, however, purchase by agent has not been generally adopted.

**MILK IN RESTAURANTS.**—A defence sometimes put forward when cases are heard is that coffee hotels and restaurants are entitled to add water to milk which they keep for supply to customers either in coffee or as a separate article. This defence is available only when the vendor can prove that in no circumstances is he prepared to supply milk alone. The Act as amended now says that the Court may presume that "any food found in the possession of a person who is in the habit of storing like articles of food for sale has been stored by such person for sale." Accordingly when milk is found in the possession of a hotel-keeper who is in the habit of selling milk as such, there can be no question but that a prosecution lies. The addition of water to milk prepared for sale is now prohibited in the rules made under the Act, and neither declaration nor labelling is any defence.

**PRESCRIBED MEDICINES.**—In the case of drugs a tolerance of 10 per cent. error is allowed. Mixtures in which the error in dispensing an essential ingredient exceeds this amount are classed as adulterated. Eight mixtures were certified as inaccurately dispensed.

H. HAWLEY