

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.

REPORT OF THE CITY ANALYST FOR THE SECOND QUARTER, 1926.

THE total number of samples examined during the quarter was 1349, of which 1192 were taken under the Food and Drugs Acts.

FERTILISERS.—Eleven samples were examined for the Agricultural and Small Holdings Committee, and 7 of the vendors were cautioned. There is still a good deal of ignorance or carelessness in relation to the guarantees of the percentages of nitrogen, phosphate and potash required by the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act. In several cases no guarantees were given. A sample of kainit contained

10·1 per cent. of potash, whilst 12·4 per cent. was guaranteed. A general fertiliser containing 2·7 per cent. of nitrogen gave the amount of ammonia, but not the required percentage of nitrogen. In a garden fertiliser the percentage of phosphates was somewhat in excess of the amount guaranteed.

FOOD AND DRUGS.—Of the 1192 samples, 1161 were bought informally (35 adulterated), and 31 were bought formally (7 adulterated). Three samples of margarine were not labelled in accordance with the Act.

MILK.—Of the 658 samples analysed, 33 were adulterated. Twenty-seven of 445 samples taken from 16 different farmers were adulterated. In several cases a sample which was deficient in fat was accompanied by one or more samples containing a fair amount of fat, which suggests either carelessness in mixing the milk or that the deficiency was due to very unequal intervals of milking.

In view of the great increase in the quantity of milk brought by motor lorry, attempts were made to take samples systematically at the depots, and during the quarter 297 such samples were examined. It is more difficult, however, to follow up samples thus taken than those taken on a railway station. When milk is sampled informally at a depot the farm may have early intimation of the sampling, whereas this is very unusual when the milk is sampled at a railway station.

In one instance milk sampled at a depot contained 34 per cent. of added water, but the two following samples were of good quality, as were also samples taken at the farm. In three instances it appeared probable that the depot was not the place of delivery, and information was given to the County Authorities in whose district the farm was situated, so that they could follow up the case. There was no great difference in the samples obtained at railway stations and at the depots.

BORIC ACID IN CAKES.—Twenty-three informal samples of *sponge cake* were free from boric acid; one sample contained 13 grains per lb., but a subsequent formal sample contained none. Six informal samples of *cake* were either free from boric acid or contained only small amounts, but a sample of Genoa cake contained 6 grains, and a sample of plain cake from the same vendor, 17 grains per lb.

GROUND GINGER.—Twelve informal samples were genuine, but one sample contained about 3 per cent., and another about 2 per cent. of chalk and sand.

SEIDLITZ POWDERS.—Eleven of the 15 samples were of the correct composition and fairly uniform weights. One sample had been carelessly weighed, only 1·6 and 1·7 grms. of tartaric acid being present. Two samples were sold as Seidlitz powders, but approximated in composition to the "extra strength," one of them was marked "E.S." but this gave no indication to the purchaser that he was receiving a stronger drug.

Another contained an excess of 2·4 grms. of Rochelle salt, and also 0·8 grm. of sodium bicarbonate, and the resulting draught, instead of being practically neutral, would be alkaline. Three of the vendors were cautioned.

One sample of "Extra Strong" Seidlitz powders was of the correct composition, another was marked "Sweetened," and contained saccharin. The single sample of "Double Strength" was of correct composition.

J. F. LIVERSEEGE.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF STEPNEY.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOROUGH ANALYST FOR 1925.

OF the 1414 samples analysed during the year, 1378 were purchased by inspectors under the Food and Drugs Acts, and comprised 886 formal and 492 informal samples.

MILK.—Twenty-four of the 825 samples examined were adulterated. In the case of one sample containing 19·4 per cent. of added water the vendor stated, at the time of purchase, that the milk was sour and was to be used for cheese-making. The milk was perfectly fresh, however, and this was mentioned on the certificate. A fine of £4 was imposed.

The vendor of another sample, showing a deficiency of 20 per cent. of fat, stated that there was a continuous sale of milk to customers while the cows were being milked. Samples of evening and morning milk taken from this cow showed 5·20 and 1·60 per cent. of fat, respectively, whilst the mixed morning milk from the rest of the herd showed 2·68 per cent. of fat. It is of interest to note that these samples were obtained from one of the cowsheds in the Borough. The cows are kept in these sheds for about 10 months, and are then disposed of.

DRUGS.—Six of the 83 samples examined were adulterated. Two (informal) samples of grey powder were deficient in mercury to the extent of 38·1 and 85·3 per cent., respectively.

Sal Volatile.—An informal sample contained 1·5 per cent. of chloroform, and was 8·2 per cent. deficient in alcohol (sp. gr. at 15° C.=0·924). The formal sample contained 2·5 per cent. of chloroform and was 10·1 per cent. deficient in alcohol (sp. gr. 0·930). The vendor was fined £5, with £4 5s. costs. It is possible that spirit of chloroform had been used instead of alcohol (90 per cent.).

CANNED FISH.—Five samples, examined for the Public Health Department, were unsatisfactory. The interior of the tins showed considerable corrosion, and all contained excessive quantities of tin, *viz.* 5·3, 2·5, 4·2, 4·0, and 4·2 grains per lb., respectively.

DOUGLAS HENVILLE.