

LABORATORY  
OF THE  
INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT  
OTTAWA, CANADA.

BULLETIN No. 292

CONFECTIONERY (MARSHMALLOWS)

OTTAWA, September 8 1914.

J. U. VINCENT, Esq.,  
Deputy Minister of Inland Revenue,

SIR,—I have the honour to hand you a report upon ninety-three (93) samples of so called Marshmallows (confectionery), purchased by our inspectors in May, June and July of this year.

Complaints have been made that various confections in which whiteness is desired, and so called "Marshmallows" in particular, frequently contain notable amounts of sulphurous acid and sulphites. It was with a view to ascertaining whether or not any ground in fact existed for these complaints that the collection now reported was made.

It is gratifying to know that dangerous excess of sulphurous acid has not been found in any sample. Fifty-one (51) samples (constituting 55 per cent on the whole) are found to be entirely free from sulphurous acid, and 20 others yield traces only.

Twenty-two samples (23 per cent of the collection) contain distinct amounts of sulphurous acid; but in no case does the quantity present exceed one part in two thousand parts (1 in 2,000) by weight of the confection. This amount is generally believed to be quite harmless to health, and is permitted by Order in Council of 4th April last, published by this department as Circular G 1111.

The Order in Council named became effective on the 11th May of this year; and decrees that when sulphurous acid (in any form) is present in a food or drink, the fact of its presence shall be declared on the label. This condition was not fulfilled in any of the cases herein reported, and in strict reading of the law, all samples in which any determinable amounts of sulphurous acid were found, are amenable to penalty.

Since, however the collection was made so soon after the Order in Council became effective, and inasmuch as it is usual to allow a reasonable period of time to elapse between the publication of a new regulation and its enforcement, in cases where danger to health is not involved, I would respectfully recommend that, so far as this report is concerned, no action be taken by the department. I would further recommend publication of this report as Bulletin No. 292.

I have the honour to be, Sir  
Your obedient servant,

A. MCGILL,  
*Chief Analyst*