
BULLETIN No. 27.—DISTILLED LIQUORS.

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SIR,—It is a popular impression that many of the spirituous liquors offered for sale in Canada are more or less adulterated. When engaged in collecting food samples for analysis the inspectors connected with this branch are not unfrequently asked why they do not take samples at liquor stores, where, it is assumed, the mixing or “drugging” of liquors is carried on, and is much more injurious to the public health than are the falsifications of ordinary groceries or food stuffs. The same idea is sometimes mentioned in the newspapers, as the following extract from a recent issue of *La Presse* will show. Referring to spirituous liquors generally it says:—“Toutes ces liqueurs, plus ou moins mauvaises pour la santé de ceux qui en consomment quelques coups par jour, sont pernicieuses au plus haut degré pour ceux qui en abusent, et cela quand ces liqueurs sont de bonne fabrication et de source naturelle. Que sera cet empoisonnement, si ces mêmes liqueurs, pour la concurrence commerciale et pour atteindre le bon marché relatif, sont fabriquées de toutes pièces par un simple mélange d’alcool et d’eau, et de teintures avec essences et huiles diverses. C’est là, souvent, le genre simple des liquides absorbés à bon marché.”

Not only is it believed that liquors are thus falsified, but it is maintained that the adulterants present in alcoholic beverages often produce worse effects than the alcohol itself. The Rev. Father McCallen, of St. Patrick’s Church, Montreal, spoke as follows at a temperance convention held there on the 1st October, 1890:—“If a butcher sold tainted meat, a druggist compounded an injurious prescription, a baker adulterated his food products, they were pounced upon by the law; but those who send men to their homes intellectual, physical and moral wrecks, through the sale of adulterated beverages, which so quickly affect the brain, shatter the health, bring disease to the body and create an irresistible craving in the drunkard for still greater potations, did so with an impunity which is simply appalling to contemplate.” In addition to this, it has been plainly stated that no returns have been made by the officers of the Government with regard to any analysis of intoxicating liquors. Mr. J. J. Curran, member for Montreal Centre, said in Parliament: “I believe that the officers of the Government are being instructed to analyse liquors issued from compounderies and distilleries, but I am not aware any such steps have been taken with regard to places where liquors are sold by retail.” The Hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue was able at once to correct this mistake, and said: “When my hon. friend says that while analyses have been made of different items of food and drugs, none have been made of liquors, he is not, perhaps, aware that officers in the Chief Analyst’s Branch of the Department have collected very large numbers of samples in different cities throughout the Dominion, with the view of ascertaining the condition of the liquors sold by retailers.” I have thought it necessary to call your attention to these facts as a justification for addressing to you the following report on distilled liquors, and requesting that you will cause the same to be published in the Bulletin series, in order that the public may understand the exact position of this branch of the Department with reference to the alleged adulteration of the liquors in question.