

from Nyasaland sent in connection with the question of the improvement of the quality of tobacco grown in the Protectorate, now being investigated by the Plant and Animal Products section of the Imperial Institute.

**China clay from Union of South Africa.** Amongst the minerals examined from South Africa may be mentioned a crude china clay from Cape Province. This material, after being washed to remove the small amount of gritty matter present, gave a product not quite equal to the best quality English china clay. Analyses and technical trials in the ceramic laboratory showed that the washed china clay could be used for making china and earthenware and possibly in the manufacture of certain grades of paper.

**Nickel from Tahiti.** Four samples of igneous rock examined from Tahiti were of some interest, as nickel was present in all, but as the richest contained 0.81 per cent. of nickel oxide the minerals were not of immediate commercial importance.

**Portland cement.** During the year, reports have been furnished on 57 consignments of British-made Portland cement intended for export. Of these, 38 consignments were tested in full, according to the requirements of the Argentine Government Specification (1914) and 7 were rejected on preliminary tests. In addition, 12 consignments were tested in full, according to the requirements of the British Standard Specification (1926), and, in addition, compression tests were carried out on the neat cement and cement-sand mortars at 7 and 28 days after gauging. In addition to the work incurred in regard to the necessary physical and chemical tests, the Staff had to pay about 56 visits to cement works during the year in order to sample the cement and to inspect its loading.

During the latter part of the year, the shortage of fuel due to the coal strike caused a serious diminution in the export of cement, and hence a decrease in the number of samples tested.

It may be noted that the Imperial Institute has a representative on the Portland Cement Committee of the British Engineering Standards Association, and took part in an extensive series of co-operative tests immediately prior to the issue of the latest (1926) Specification for Portland cement. Further work is in progress in the cement laboratory for that Committee.