WORLD'S TEA SUPPLY

Great Britain Imported Over Forty-seven per cent. of Total—Transhipments and Re-exports

A summary of Great Britain's tea trade gives a total export from all countries of 749,250,000 lbs., compared with 737,000,000 lbs. for the previous year. Of this quantity, the United Kingdom received 357,000,000 lbs., against 347,250,000 lbs., while 392,250,000 lbs., against 389,250,000 lbs. were distributed amongst other markets of the world, states the annual review of Messrs. William James and Henry Thompson, of Mincing Lane, London, which presents a complete survey of this important business during the period, June 1, 1912, to May 31, 1913, and while mainly dealing with the trade of the United Kingdom, includes several matters of interest to Canada.

Omitting China tea, the London market has dealt with 3,251,000 packages at public auction, and the average price realized was 8.81d. per lb. Compared with last year, the figures were 2,950,000 packages, averaging 9.03d. per lb. About 50,000 packages of China black tea have been offered at public sale.

Deliveries to meet home consumption and for re-export have totalled 356,250,000 lbs. against 346,000,000 lbs., and transhipments have accounted for 19,000,000 lbs., against 22,000,000 lbs. a year ago. The total stock in bond on May 31 was 87,750,000 lbs., against 82,500,000 lbs., the excess being confined almost entirely to Java tea.

Re-exports for Two Seasons.

The report, which is accompanied by a variety of statistics, shows that the total re-exports for the past two seasons from the United Kingdom amounted to 55,777,800 lbs. in 1912-13 against 47,920,000 lbs. in 1911-12; whilst the re-export and transhipment figures, June 1st to May 31st, specially relating to Canada were as follows:—

	Re-exports.		Transhipments.	
	1912-13.	1911-12.	1912-13.	1911-12.
	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.
Indian	2,228,600	2,259,400	7,461,400	7,397,900
Ceylon	4,194,700	3,404,300	1,203,200	1,513,000
China	221,200	512,700	200	15,700
Java	402,500	355,000	50,800	129,900
	7,047,000	6,531,400	8,715,600	9,056,500

It is stated that although the past season has not been so remunerative to producers as its immediate predecessors, it has nevertheless been good, and with few exceptions returns have recorded another year of prosperity. Broadly speaking, the high prices of 1911-12 attracted increased crops, which, synchronizing with a somewhat inferior standard of quality, influenced a lower level of value. In the case of growers producing medium qualities, compensation for reduced prices has been found in larger yields, and this is more particularly applicable to Assam. On the other hand, those interested in the production of common tea have not been so fortunate; an appreciably lower market has existed for that variety, and taken as a whole, it has not been covered by heavier crops. Conditions, however, were abnormal during the previous year, bountiful crops and a high market for low grades giving exceptional results. Good to fine qualities have always brought full rates.

No Material Fluctuation in Values.

In comparison with 1911-12, when sellers enjoyed a consistently ready market with no material fluctuations in values, the reverse has been experienced, varying conditions having occasioned much irregularity, rendering the position frequently unsettled and difficult for all sections of the trade. The course of the market has, however, been influenced more by actual visible supplies than by anticipations, while the tone has been sensitive to the extent that only slight variations in shipments have on occasion been sufficient to cause a very pronounced change.

Among outstanding features have been that a much heavier proportion than usual of the total supply was shipped to the United Kingdom during the first half of the season, and that there has been a notable increase in the crop received from northern India. Other noteworthy features are the recent indications of curtailed outputs from many estates in Ceylon owing to rubber encroachments, the decrease in the use of China tea, the exceptional increase in that of Java tea in the United Kingdom, and whereas there has been steady progress in the consumption of tea outside of the United Kingdom, the increase in the home consumption has been insignificant, amounting to only three-quarters of one per cent.

As regards the future, it is thought that the question of prospective supply is the all-important factor. Results of the past year have been generally satisfactory to producers, and the crops have not in the aggregate proved to be overabundant, so there is no inducement to growers to depart in any decided way from the present conduct of affairs except perhaps in the direction of avoiding the production of exceptionally low grade and unsightly tea, which would be a very desirable policy. Climatic conditions and the preponderance of additional mature areas over abandonments are the controlling influences.

Canada is a Potential Market.

As to the consumption of tea in markets outside of Great Britain, it is thought that the outlook is promising, and whereas, more particularly as regards Indian tea, the controlling influence lies with Russia—because during the last twenty years the import of China tea into Russia is officially stated to have declined about 33 per cent.—the tendency is for Java to benefit in the colonial markets by her favorable geographical position contrasted with India and Ceylon. The United States and Canada are potential markets, says Mr. Harrison Watson, Canadian trade commissioner at London, capable of useful expansion by reason of the continued addition to the population of habitual tea drinkers, and in this connection it is stated that Canada took about a million pounds more from the local market in Calcutta during the period under consideration, but consumption on the continent of Europe can only be regarded as more or less stationary.

The report concludes that, broadly speaking, the indications are similar to those of last year; that a fair increase can be absorbed at a remunerative level of price without inconvenience, but it is generally admitted that crops of somewhat better quality from India, Ceylon and also from Java, would be a welcome feature.

USES FOR SAWDUST

Not so very long ago about the only real use anyone had for sawdust was for packing ice. That was when small local saw-mills were more common, and the amount of this form of waste wood was, or at any rate appeared, comparatively small. Now, when the tendency is to consolidate these into large mills with a capacity of several hundred thousand feet of lumber per day, the daily waste in sawdust is seen to be enormous and much experimenting is being done to discover new methods of utilizing it.

Perhaps the most promising venture in sawdust utilization in this country is the manufacture of ethyl (or grain) alcohol. The sawdust is treated with sulphuric acid under suitable conditions, resulting in the formation of sugar, which is then fermented to produce alcohol. Several plants have been erected to produce alcohol from wood in this manner, and, though there are some difficulties still to be overcome, the ultimate success of the process on a commercial scale is assured.

Sawdust has been successfully manufactured into briquets for fuel for a considerable time in Europe by a very simple process. The shavings and sawdust are first steam-dried, the water contained in the wood being thus evaporated and the resin almost liquified. The sawdust is then compressed under heat into briquets of the desired size, the contained resin as a binder. A firm in Vancouver is engaged in a similar line of manufacture, the sawdust being compressed into a cylindrical tube where it is cut into short lengths by a revolving knife, emerging in the form of small round briquets. These briquets are clean to handle, easy to kindle, and leave very little ash.

In England sugar is manufactured on a commercial scale by treating sawdust in closed retorts with weak sulphurous acid under high pressure. In Austin, Texas, also a plant is being built to manufacture stock food from sawdust, by a somewhat similar process. The tar, pitch and turpentine are removed from the sawdust leaving only sugar and fibre to which is added forty per cent. of cottonseed meal. The mixture is sold for fattening cattle.

Two and one-half parts of clean sawdust mixed with two parts sand and one part cement make a warm long-wearing and sound-proof floor, to which carpets can be tacked with less injury than to a board floor, and which has the advantage over a cement floor in being more elastic. These qualities should win an extensive use for this form of flooring, which has the additional advantage that it can be stained to harmonize with interior finishings by the addition of color to the mixture while in a semi-liquid state.

The sawdust of certain kinds of wood is used in considerable quantities by manufacturers for metal polish, for packing, for meat curing, for making safety explosives and composition novelties, and for fibre and pulp manufacture. Patent cleaning powders for use on carpets and rugs consist principally of sawdust, lightly moistened by some cheap mineral oil.