

LABORATORY
OF THE
INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT
OTTAWA, CANADA

BULLETIN No. 130

TEA, 1906

OTTAWA, January 8, 1907.

W. J. GERALD, Esq.,

Deputy Minister of Inland Revenue.

SIR,—In the month of July last representations were made to you regarding the artificial colouring of teas, and stating that large quantities of artificially coloured green, Japan and Ceylon teas were imported into the Canadian market by every steamer. The complaints came from Toronto, and although it was believed that such colouring or 'facing' was not a common practice, it was nevertheless thought advisable to cause a collection of tea samples to be made. This took place in August and September, 1906, when samples were collected and subjected to examination in this laboratory, the results of which, as ascertained by Mr. A. Valin, are given in the tabulated statement accompanying this report.

In considering these results it is necessary to remember that there exists an Order in Council, dated September 11, 1894, establishing the following regulation under the 19th section of the Adulteration Act as to when the tea shall be considered as adulterated:—

Tea shall be considered as adulterated which contains leaves other than those of the tea-plant; or previously infused leaves or leaves of inferior quality to such an extent as to reduce the amount of extract or substances soluble in hot water to less than thirty per cent, or cause the proportion of ash soluble in hot water to be less than two and three quarters per cent; or any admixture of chemicals or other deleterious substances, or such an amount of mineral matter as will cause the amount of ash to exceed eight per cent reckoned on the sample dried at 100° C.

It has not been found necessary to introduce into the statement a column giving the amount of ash calculated on the dry substance. The highest percentage of ash found in any sample is 7.20 (No. 713) which corresponds to 7.87 on the dry substance. This result disposes of the assertion that many of the teas sold in our markets are artificially coloured or 'faced' because the materials used for the purpose tend to increase the quantity of ash. Neither was any evidence of facing obtained in treating the samples with warm water. Seven of the samples (Nos. 31505, 31508, 29366, 30182, 30161, 28177 and 28180) show smaller percentages of soluble ash in the dried sample than 2.75, but since the amount of hot water extract is not below the minimum they cannot be challenged as containing exhausted tea leaves, although they may be classed as doubtful.