

LABORATORY
OF THE
INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT
OTTAWA, CANADA

BULLETIN No. 209

Spiritus Menthae Piperitæ.

OTTAWA, June 15, 1910.

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Deputy Minister of Inland Revenue.

SIR,—I beg to hand you herewith the results of examination of 71 samples of Spirit of Peppermint, purchased throughout Canada in March of this year.

Spiritus Menthae Piperitæ popularly known as Spirit of Peppermint, is thus prepared according to the British Pharmacopœia (Edu 1898):—

	Imperial.	Metric.
Oil of Peppermint	1 fl. ounce	50 cc
Alcohol (90 p.c.)	a sufficient quantity.	

To the oil of peppermint add enough of the alcohol to form 10 fluid ounces (or 500 cc) of the spirit of peppermint

The spirit of peppermint of the British Pharmacopœia of 1885 contained only one-fifth as much oil of peppermint as the above.

The manufacture is very simple, being merely the solution of a proper quantity of the oil in alcohol of correct strength. Hence we find that spirit of peppermint is usually prepared by the local druggist.

Adulteration may consist in (1) using an adulterated oil of peppermint; (2) using incorrect proportion of oil of peppermint; (3) using alcohol of incorrect strength; (4) using wood alcohol (or methylated spirit) instead of ethyl alcohol; (5) using an ingredient not prescribed by the pharmacopœia, such as a dye.

1. Oil of peppermint is, for various reasons, less liable to adulteration than most essential oils. No special examination of the separated oil has been made, in the case of samples now reported.

2. The oil should constitute one-tenth part by volume of the finished preparation. The method of dilution and separation employed in this work is described by Leach (Food Inspection and Analysis, 2nd Edn. p. 865) and yields a very close approximation to the actual content of oil, as proved by working upon samples prepared in the laboratory. Thirty-one (31) samples, being 44 per cent, of the total collection, were found to contain the proper amount of oil of peppermint. The remainder exhibit great carelessness in preparation, and 32 samples contain only 5 per cent of oil, or less than this amount.