

The Present Status of Food Control in Canada.

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AMONG the early settlers in this country, when each family raised their own food and made their clothing from the wool of their own sheep, adulteration of foods and commercial frauds were unknown and unpractised. As the population increased and towns and cities came into existence, it was no longer possible for each family to produce their own food, and they were compelled to look to the butcher, the baker and the grocer for their daily supplies. Furthermore, the accumulation of wealth has developed a demand for a more luxurious diet, and the more or less unnatural method of living has created a demand for more tempting and highly seasoned foods. Science, too, by furnishing us with a fuller knowledge of the component parts of food and their function in the body, has served to increase the number and variety of the articles of our daily diet. Business men have not been slow in catering to the demands of the market, and have made use of the facts supplied by science in preparing an almost endless list of foods for specific purposes. Competition in trade has still further augmented the number, and is largely responsible for the manner in which these are put on the market.

For these and many other reasons the list of foods and condiments now avail-

able is almost endless. Some of these foods may be better than the old-fashioned, simple materials; they may be more appetizing, more digestible and more easily prepared for the table; but, because of their great variety, their prepared condition, the keen competition in business, and the willingness of the people to be humbugged, there are greater possibilities of adulterating and more incentive to fraud in the making up of foods to-day than in the past.

None too soon the public is awakening to the need of legislation to compel merchants and manufacturers to supply pure foods, or to so label them that the buyer may understand what he is buying. In 1886 the Dominion Parliament passed an act dealing with the adulteration of foods, and ever since has seriously tried to regulate the character and quality of the food sold in our markets. The act has been amended from time to time, but as the Dominion Adulteration Act stands to-day, it defines adulterated food to be: "(1) Such as is diluted with any substance which lowers its quality or strength; (2) such as has inferior or cheaper substances mixed with it, even although these may not be injurious to health; (3) such as may be deprived of any of its valuable constituents in whole or in part; (4) such as is an imitation of or sold under the name of another article; (5) such as is wholly or in part diseased or de-