

LABORATORY
OF THE
INLAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT
OTTAWA, CANADA
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LIQUOR PICIS CARBONIS (SOLUTION OF COAL TAR.)

OTTAWA, September 20, 1909.

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Deputy Minister of Inland Revenue.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit herewith a report upon the examination of twenty-four (24) samples purchased by our inspectors as Liquor Picis Carbonis (Solution of Coal Tar).

The British Pharmacopœia directs this article to be prepared as follows—'Digest for two days at 120° F., one part by weight of prepared coal tar, in five of a Tincture of Quillaia (1 in 10, alcohol 90 per cent.) Decant, or filter when cold.'

The finished Liquor Picis Carbonis should therefore contain about 75 per cent of its weight of 90 per cent alcohol; or approximately 67·5 per cent of its weight of absolute alcohol. Allowing for evaporation and loss, it may be reasonable to accept 60 per cent by weight, or 67 per cent by volume, in the article as dispensed. In all samples containing alcohol, the content of alcohol meets quantitative requirements.

An alcoholic solution of coal tar, known as *Liquor Carbonis Detergens*, is much employed in the treatment of skin diseases. This is not official, and is not to be confounded with *Liquor Picis Carbonis*, as above described.

Various solutions of coal tar, some of them being proprietary articles, are found on the market. Five samples of this character have been accepted by our inspectors. In accepting these articles, unless expressly supplied as Liquor Picis Carbonis, our Inspectors are at fault.

This is clearly the case in Nos. 987 and 988, which are distinctly labelled '*Goudron de Norvège*', and are proprietary. They contain no alcohol. Nos. 41170 and 41171 (Kingston) and 41345 (Toronto) are likewise non-alcoholic solutions of tar. If they were offered as *Liquor Picis Carbonis*, the vendor is guilty of substitution. It would appear from the remarks of the inspector that No. 41345 was actually so supplied, but in good faith. See App. D. Liquor Picis Carbonis is the only solution of coal tar officially authorized by the British Pharmacopœia. Several other solutions of Coal Tar are more or less widely known and used. As long as these comply with the requirements of the Patent or Proprietary Medicines Act, they are properly enough dispensed, when asked for. But they must not be supplied when Liquor Picis Carbonis, or Official Solution of Coal Tar is demanded.

Of the remaining 19 samples, 13 correspond to the pharmacopœal requirements, and are genuine. Six samples are adulterated, in the sense that they are made with wood alcohol, or with methylated spirit, instead of with ethyl alcohol as required by the Pharmacopœia. The Inland Revenue Act (R. S. C. 34) enacts as follows (S. 266):—