

EDITORIAL.

MOISTURE IN TEA.

Attention is drawn to the note in this issue by Dr. Evans dealing with tea samples sent to the Institute for report.

The warning issued by the Institute in regard to the necessity for more careful checking of drying conditions has evidently been widely acted upon, and in the last three or four months nearly eight hundred samples of tea have been sent for report as to moisture content and firing generally. In view of the amount of work, largely purely routine in nature, involved in these determinations, it is necessary to define the attitude of the Institute in this matter. The Institute is naturally prepared to give superintendents the fullest possible assistance in checking their firing methods and in working out proper conditions of drying. In order that such work may be of the widest possible application, however, superintendents are asked in return to co-operate by forwarding in every case with their samples the information detailed in Dr. Evans' note. If this be done valuable data in regard to different types of dryers will rapidly be accumulated which should be of general interest.

On the other hand, the Institute cannot undertake the regular routine examination of factory breaks for moisture content. Such an undertaking would take up far too much of the time of the Staff, to the serious detriment of more important work.

It is realised, however, that a knowledge of the moisture contents of teas prior to packing is of importance, as the necessity, or otherwise, of final firing can only be decided on such data. In order, therefore, that superintendents may be in a position to carry out such determinations themselves, the Institute has approached various instrument makers with suggestions for a type of apparatus suitable for factory conditions. Further particulars will be announced in due course.

FACTORY HANDBOOK.

It is regretted that the necessity for further revision has delayed the publication of the new edition of the "Handbook of Factory Information". It is hoped, however, that this will now be issued about the end of March. It is necessary to emphasize that this Handbook deals only with the details of manufacture as carried out at St. Coombs, and it is not for a moment suggested that such methods can be applied without modification in factories where conditions may be totally different. It is hoped, however, to issue shortly a further publication dealing with manufacturing problems in a more general way.

TEA MACHINERY.

Elsewhere in this issue a brief account will be found of the new McKercher C.T.C. Roller, considerable numbers of which machines are said to have been installed in North India. Details of the performances of these machines are not yet available and further comment must be deferred until such data have been received.

SMALL-HOLDINGS IN TEA.

The Institute has recently been considering the question of small holdings in tea, the number of which is probably much greater than is generally realised. Owing to the small size of the great majority of these holdings the conditions obtaining therein are generally bad. The leaf is very frequently sold to hawkers and in most cases undergoes considerable vicissitudes before being manufactured, and it is obvious that there is here a source from which considerable quantities of very poor tea must reach the market. It is evident, therefore, that it is very desirable, both in the interests of the small-holders themselves and of the market generally, that efforts should be made to improve the conditions now obtaining. The organisation of such work, however, presents considerable difficulties which will be realised from the figures given below which relate to holdings in the Gampola and Nawalapitiya areas alone.

Total number of holdings reported ...	1803
Holdings of less than 1 acre ...	499
Over 1 acre but less than 5 acres	1014
Over 5 acres but less than 10 acres	178
Over 10 acres but less than 20 acres	71
Over 20 acres but less than 50 acres	33
Over 50 acres	7

PRUNING EXPERIMENTS.

The pruning experiments to be carried out at Peradeniya and Galatura (vide *The Tea Quarterly*, 1930, 4, 103) will be commenced at the end of April.

NETTLE GRUB.

Nettle Grub has now been gazetted a pest under the Plant Pest Ordinance No. 10 of 1924. The notification relates to the Uva Province only, in which it is now incumbent on superintendents to report to the Department of Agriculture the presence of the pest when found and to collect the cocoons.

EXPORTS OF DUTCH TEAS.

In view of the possibility of a preferential tariff on tea being introduced in the next English Budget and the likelihood of intensified

competition by Dutch teas in some of the smaller markets, the following figures relating to the export of Java teas during 1931 are of interest:

Country	Imports of Java teas in kilos (2·2 lb.)		Percentage increase in 1931 over 1930
	1931	1930	
Australia ...	11,078,638	10,394,636	6
Egyptian Ports ...	2,687,350	1,296,610	107
Mesopotamia ...	3,432,440	2,483,964	38
British South Africa ...	549,338	346,483	58
South America ...	1,088,491	749,409	45

Exports of Java teas to these centres therefore rose in 1931 by three and a half million kilos or rather more than seven and three-quarter million pounds.

During the same period Ceylon tea exports increased by 24% only in the case of Egypt and diminished by 8% in Irak and by nearly 50% in Australia. Indian teas gave diminished figures for all the above centres. Ceylon interests in these areas obviously require close attention.

ROLAND V. NORRIS.