

1874.

NEW ZEALAND.

COLONIAL LABORATORY REPORTS.

(SPECIAL REPORT ON ADULTERATIONS.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

MEMORANDUM by Dr. HECTOR for the Hon. the PREMIER.

IN reply to your inquiry, I have the honor to remark,—

1. The subject of the *Adulteration of Food* has three aspects—

(1.) Fraud.

(2.) As affecting public health.

(3.) As a disturbing element in financial and commercial arrangements.

2. To discover adulteration is a simple application of chemical analysis. To prove adulteration, and trace it to an individual, with the view of repressing it by punishment, requires a thoroughly organized system of medical police.

3. In this colony articles must be examined for adulteration effected before importation, either by the original manufacturer, or by exporters using forged brands; also, for adulterations effected by retailers; and lastly, adulterations of articles of local manufacture.

The following is a list of some of the articles sold in this colony which are often adulterated before importation:—Tea, coffee, cocoa, breadstuffs, oatmeal, arrowroot, sago, anchovies, mustard, peppers, curry powder, spices generally, vinegar, sauces, pickles, isinglass, confectionery (sugar), wine, beer, porter, brandy, white lead, litharge, linseed meal, sperm oil, olive oil, woollen goods, candles. The adulterations of all the above have been fully investigated at home, and the application of the results there obtained to the goods in this colony will be quite easy, provided it is not desired to take legal proceedings, as it will be unnecessary to prove where the adulteration was effected. Small samples may be purchased and examined by competent analysts. Such examinations have been frequently performed in the Colonial Laboratory, and do not involve any great expense. The adulterations effected by retailers in the colony are chiefly those of wines and spirits—especially brandy—and also beers in some districts, especially on the “diggings.” The colonial-made beer is constantly examined in the Laboratory for the Customs Department, and in no instance has any adulteration been yet found. There would probably be no object in investigating the adulterations effected by retail dealers, except with the view of repression. This is already provided for by Act.

Wellington, 25th April, 1874.

JAMES HECTOR.

No. 2.

Dr. HECTOR to the Hon. the PREMIER.

SIR,—

The Colonial Laboratory, Wellington, 17th July, 1874.

I have the honor to enclose a schedule of the results of the analyses of various articles of commerce which have been examined in the Laboratory in accordance with your instructions of the 27th April last, with the view of ascertaining whether they are free from adulteration and of good weight.

In the column headed “Adulterated,” only those articles have been included which there is reason to believe have been intentionally adulterated, as in many cases impurities exist either naturally or in accordance with ordinary trade rules.

The series of analyses directed in your memorandum is not yet completed, but further reports of results will be made from time to time. A very large series of samples of the liquors sold on the gold fields have been received through the Hon. the Commissioner of Customs, the examination of which will occupy the Analyst's time for several months.

I have, &c.,

JAMES HECTOR.

The Hon. the Premier.