

preparation of the leaves after picking. For black Tea, the leaves are evenly spread out on trays and then left to wither and soften. They are then allowed after rolling to ferment before being heated in large ovens. With green Tea there is no withering process, and special precautions have to be taken against fermentation. There is no truth in the popular belief that the better quality and more expensive blends of Tea come from selected plants or special plantations. It is a fact, however, that Tea which grows at a higher altitude is often of better quality than that which grows on the low-lands.

TEA COMES TO AUSTRALIA

Most of the Tea we drink in Australia comes to us from Ceylon, but we also get supplies of Tea from India, Pakistan and Indonesia, and small, irregular supplies from China. Chinese Tea is used principally for blending other Teas.

The Australian Tea Controller, who is appointed by the Commonwealth Government, has the responsibility of purchasing all Australia's Tea requirements. He is in continuous close contact with the producing countries of the world and advises his agents to purchase for him at auction the required amounts of the various kinds of Tea.

Commonwealth consumption statistics guide the Tea Controller in his purchases, and Tea samples airmailed to him provide an indication of what he may expect from the various plantations.

When the Tea arrives in Australia in bulk, it is delivered to the major wholesalers.

The major wholesalers, after they have blended and packaged the Tea, distribute it to the retailers, or in some cases they pass it on to smaller wholesalers, who then distribute it to the retailers for sale to the public.

Wholesalers employ experienced Tea tasters to taste and classify the various types of Tea and they then mix various qualities of Tea together to form their own particular blends.

The Tea we drink in Australia to-day is probably the highest quality standard Tea available. There are some exotic and fragrant types of Tea that are not available in Australia, principally because they are too expensive.

The Tea arrives in Australia in wooden chests, tin or aluminium foil lined, averaging about 100 lb. in weight.

From the wharves the Tea chests are transported to the blending houses of the various wholesalers. Here the Tea taster takes a sample from each chest and tastes it for soundness of quality.

After he has selected the various qualities of Tea he requires, the appropriate quantity is tipped into a cylindrical, mechanically operated blending machine, which has a capacity of up to 2,000 lb.

The huge cylinder is revolved and as it moves, baffle plates inside it cause the various Teas to mix together.

After the Tea has been sufficiently blended, it is then tasted once more, this time to ensure that the blend is uniform.

From the blenders the Tea is run into a "hopper" which feeds into an automatic packing machine.

In Australia there are only two size packets, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. and 1 lb.

After the Tea has been packaged the Tea taster very often indiscriminately selects half-a-dozen packets and once more re-tastes the Tea as a final check on soundness and quality. At the entrance of the blending machine there are strong magnets which pick up any nails that may have fallen into the Tea when the chests were being nailed up in the various countries of production. Also inside the blenders are blowers which remove all fine dust or fluff.

Tea is one of the purest commodities in the world, for nothing whatever is added to Tea during its production and after it is placed on the withering racks on the various Tea estates, it is never again touched by hand.

As well as the Tea we consume in Australia, we also package and re-export small quantities of tea to other parts of the world, particularly the islands off our coast. This Tea leaves our shores either in bulk, in special heat-resisting tins, or in the normal packets.

POT POURRI OF TEA

Hard Water

It is not generally realised that the water in which Tea is brewed has a definite effect on cup quality.

Tea infuses more readily in soft water than in hard water, and alkaline water or water containing iron gives a dull-coloured infusion.

Some connoisseurs of Tea have found while travelling in various parts of Australia, that Tea made from the same packet has entirely different tastes at different times according to the different types of water used.



Eileen Bartlett, of Urunga, looked surprised when the Cameraman took her photograph