

below standard, there is always the chance that a period might occur when rejections would be numerous. If such can happen in the case of America, it is just as likely to occur in Great Britain, and might easily result in very cheap but nevertheless good tea being prohibited to the people. A further note may be made here. American experts say that the people of the United States are not educated in regard to tea, being largely coffee drinkers, but this is not so in Great Britain where really bad tea will not find consumers, and so the position is safeguarded.

A Tea Standard

A very correct decision has been taken by the British Government not to fix a minimum standard of quality for tea importations, as is mentioned in the telegrams to-day. The reason given is that it would probably lead to sound but cheap teas being taken off the market, but in addition to this there is the experience of what has happened in the United States to deter the enactment of any such measure. Tea entering the States must pass a certain standard test, and when it comes to the cheapest varieties the exporter in Shanghai or anywhere else finds himself on the horns of a very acute dilemma. He is, for example, asked by his client in America to ship the cheapest quality which will pass the official examiner, and he has either to take a chance on his idea of the cheapest possible, or play for safety by sending a rather dearer consignment which he knows will meet all the examiner's requirements. In the first instance where he chances it, he may find his tea rejected, while in the second case he may experience a nasty jar in learning that a competitor has been able to get through a quantity of tea of a very much lower quality than his. In other words he has missed the market for his really cheap tea, and has got rid of some of his moderate quality which his client at the other end did not really want. It is, of course, impossible to eliminate the human element from the judgment of a number of different examiners, and although very little China tea has in the past year or two been rejected as being