

Grocers' visit to Andover Roller Flour Mill

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The Andover Roller Mill belonging to Messrs McDougall's Ltd was visited last Wednesday by nearly 170 grocers belonging to the Grocers Association of Hants and Dorset. About 90 hailed from Southampton and Romsey, 35 from Portsmouth, 12 from Winchester, 22 from Lymington, and 20 from Wimborne.

Cleaning the wheat

The visit was of a social nature, and guests were lavishly entertained throughout. But the tour of the scrupulously clean mill was of course the principal purpose of the visit. Guides conducted the visitors over the premises and explained each process from the first cleaning of the wheat to the final packing. The foreign matter obtained from the wheat was of a surprising nature, and included nails, other bits of metal, and small stones. These articles are separated from the corn during the cleaning process, their weight taking them to the bottom, while the wheat comes to the surface, further processes eliminate maize and so on from the corn. Dust is carried away by strong air currents. and a further interesting machine takes out cockle seed, and other small seeds of weeds which grow among the corn. This machine has a revolving cylinder, through which the corn passes. On the inside of this cylinder are numerous tiny cups of the size to hold the small seeds of weeds but too small to hold a grain of wheat. The weed seeds that are caught up in those cups are tipped into a tray while the wheat travels on.

The Milling Process

The important processes of cleaning being completed, the wheat from Australia, Canada, and England is blended so as to obtain the highest possible standard of flour. The grain then commences its journey onto the mill proper. Should the grain be ground at one process, the bran would inevitably be ground into the flour, and separation become impossible. Therefore, with the object of obtaining white flour, the grinding down is done gradually, and the result of the grinding sifted after each grinding. The first of the milling machines has two rollers, the whole surfaces of which are covered with ridges of saw-edged teeth. The two rollers work on opposite directions, and their effect is not to grind the grain, but to tear it open. The broken grain is then carried in automatic hoists (long belts with little cups attached) to the floor above, where it passes through cylinders of fine wire gauze, which sift the grain from the bran. The grain then passes through a second machine, the rollers of which have finer and claw saw-edge teeth than the previous machine, after which it comes in contact with a mechanical sieve of a finer mesh. This process of gradually reducing the grain and sifting it through the sieve goes on until finally the powdered grain is passing through rollers without any teeth. The last has smooth rollers, both running in the same direction, while the mesh of the silk through which it is sieved is very fine indeed. The silk used for the purpose of sifting is all made in Switzerland and costs £1 a yard. The completed flour is passed to the packing department where it is mechanically weighed and discharged into paper bags, which are packed by girls, ready for dispatch to grocery shops.

Interesting Presentation

Following inspection of the mill, an enjoyable tea opportunity was taken to present the Bournemouth Grocers' Association with the cup for bowling (offered by Messrs McDougall) recently won by them. The winners were congratulated on their success by Mr McDougall. The cup was then handed by Mrs McDougall to Mr J Perron-Lock, chairman of the

Bournemouth Grocers' Association. Thanking Mrs McDougall, Mr Perron-Lock expressed the appreciation of the hosts at the hospitality extended to them by Mr and Mrs McDougall. He further referred to the extremely amicable relationship existing between the firm, and all who had dealings with them.

Mr E Brown, captain of the winning team and chairman of the Chamber of Trade, Bournemouth, thanked Mr McDougall for offering the cup for successful winners. A vote of thanks to Mr and Mrs McDougall, with cheers, was given by Mr A Kille, president of the Hants Dorset Council of Grocers' Association, seconded by Mr A W Thresher.