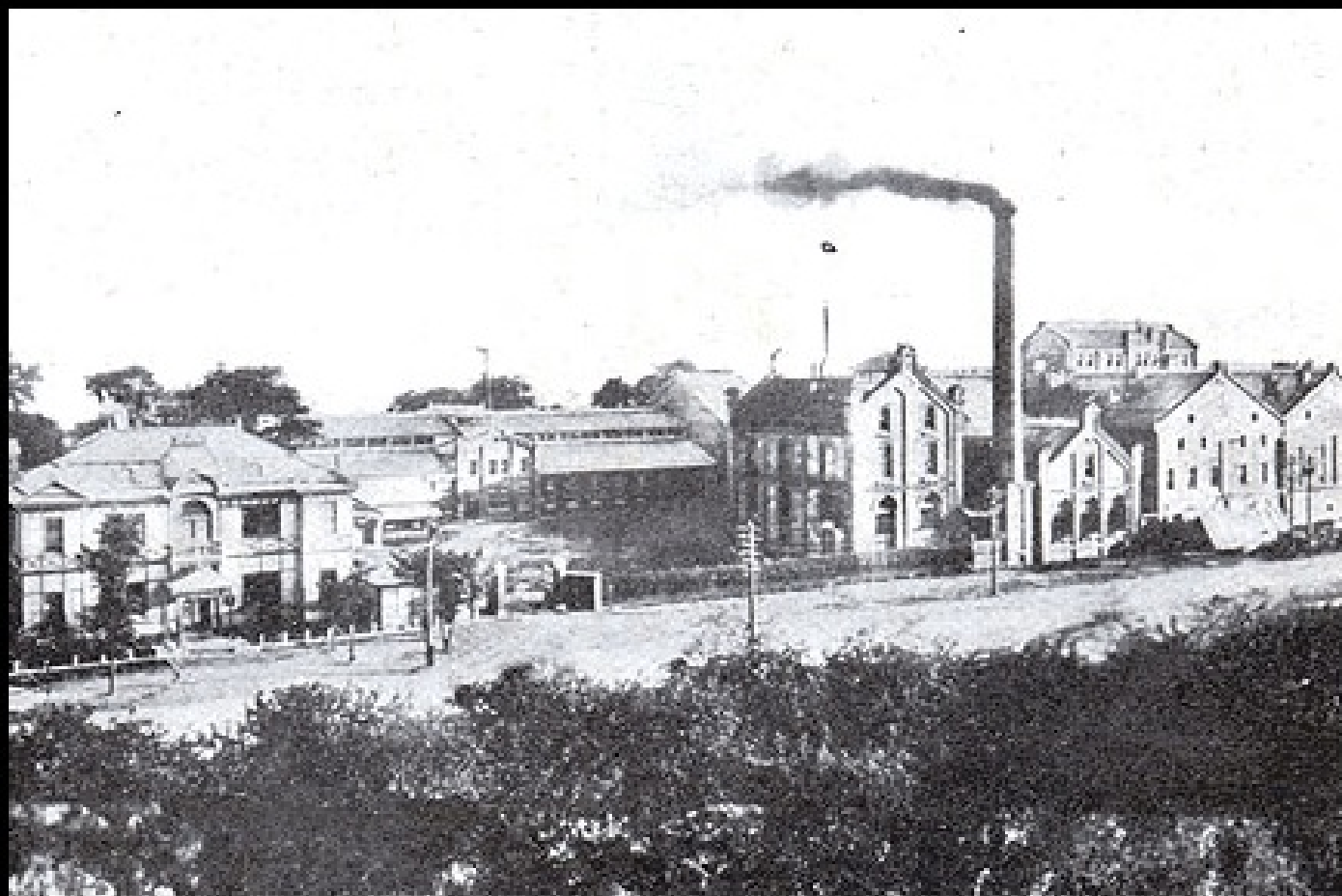


JAPANESE BEER



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Japanese Beer

THE JAPAN MAGAZINE

June, 1914, pp. 83-88



OSAKA



AZUMABASHI



MEGURO



SAPPORO

DAI NIPPON BREWERY COMPANY



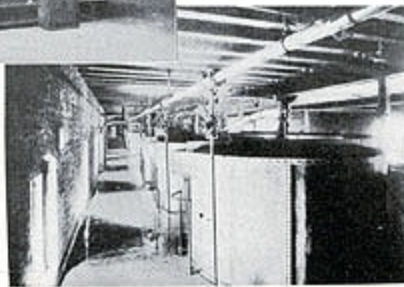
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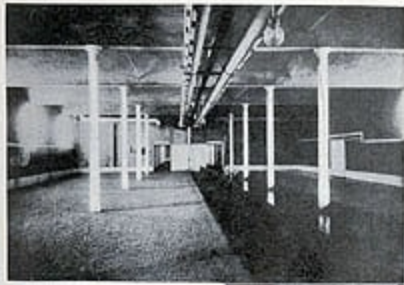
GRANARY



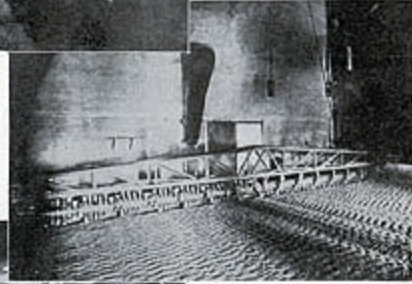
GRAIN CLEANERS



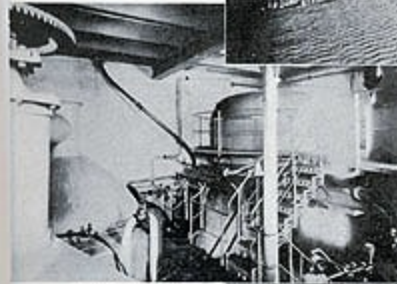
VATS



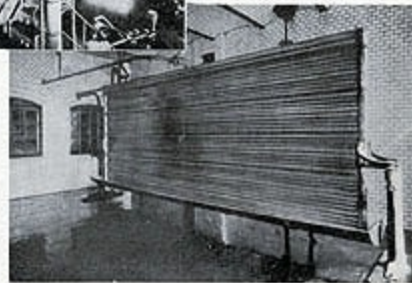
GERMINATING ROOM



KILN



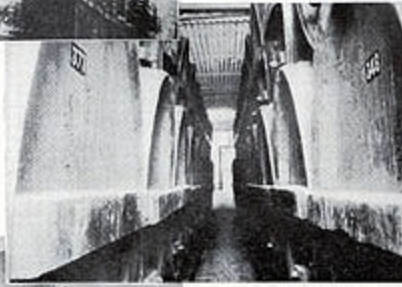
BREW HOUSE



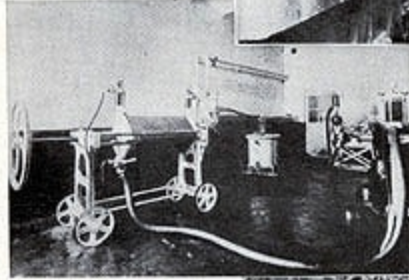
VAT COOLER



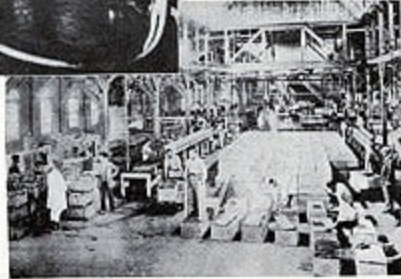
FERMENTING ROOM



LAGER CELLARS



FILTERERS



PACKING ROOM

JAPANESE BEER

By SHIN TAKASUGI

(MANAGER, DAI NIPPON BREWERY CO.)

JAPAN is bound to be in the fashion, in food and drink as well as in other ways, and has already developed quite a thirst for beer, though the stronger beverages, such as whisky and wine, have not yet taken complete possession of the nation. Up to the year 1876 all the beer consumed in Japan was imported; but in that year the Hokkaido government instituted a series of experiments in the growing of barley and hops, which proved so successful that the Government was encouraged to build a brewery at Sapporo, where the manufacture of beer was first begun in Japan. The success of the initiatory enterprise created wide interest; and within the next ten years many private brewing companies sprang up to exploit the business, including the Ebisu Beer Company, at Meguro near Tokyo; the Asahi Brewing Company at Fukida near Osaka, and the Kirin Beer Company at Yokohama. In 1895 the Kabuto Beer Company was also established near Tokyo. By this time Beer had become quite a popular drink all over Japan, especially for feasts and parties.

Up to the time when the first beer brewery was set up in Hokkaido imports of beer to Japan amounted to about 400,000 yen a year in value, most of the imports coming from the Bath Brewing Company in England. Even ten years later when the first Japanese brewery had been going for as long, the annual imports still totaled 460,000 yen. But with the gradual increase of output by the domestic companies and attainment of greater perfection in beer making, imports began to decrease until by the year 1895 they had almost ceased. At present the only imports of beer to Japan are certain brands of German and American beer to meet the fancy of the fastidious. Even this finds consumption chiefly among the foreign residents of Japan. Not only do the domestic breweries now supply all the home demand but they export beer to the value of some 700,000 yen a year.

Statistics of production show that in 1912 the various breweries of Japan produced nearly 7,00,000 gallons of beer. Compared with foreign countries this output may appear insignificant, but it means much for the industry in Japan. Any one of the great breweries of America, England or Germany makes more beer than this in any one

year, so that the industry in Japan may feel still in its infancy. It has to be remembered, however, that the Japanese will never become as great a beer consuming people as occidentals; they are far too fond of their native beverage, sake, for that. Owing to the small percentage of alcohol in sake it is regarded as a light drink, popular among the common people everywhere. It is so cheap too as to be sold at prices that put it within the reach of all, even the poorest. There is a sentiment and a tradition associated with the national drink that somewhat resembles the Scotchman's affection for whiskey. Presumably most people abroad, who drink beer, might be tempted to take whiskey instead, if it could be had as cheaply as beer. In Japan sake can be had at prices that closely rival those of beer; and when the average citizen thinks of treating himself or a friend or both, he will always prefer the national drink for the sake of association if for no other reason. In the year 1912 over 150,000,000 gallons of sake were brewed in Japan. But sake contains more alcohol than beer, though not so much as whiskey or wine. Most sake has about 15% alcohol, while most whiskey and brandy have about 40% alcohol, but the average Japanese beer has only about 3 or 4% of alcohol. Now that there is on foot a temperance movement against the use of alcoholic beverages in Japan, it is possible that public attention may be more favorable to beer than to either whiskey or sake. But the price will have to be reduced considerably before beer is yet within the reach of all classes of the population.

The percentage in growth of output in Japan is about the same as that obtaining for some years abroad, namely about ten per cent. This increase of output and consumption is especially perceptible in the United States. Formerly Germany occupied the first place in beer consumption; but now America consumes greater quantities of beer than Germany and stands in the first place in general consumption of the beverage. In 1890 the United States produced over 400,000,000 gallons of beer. In 1910 this amount had increased to over 1,000,000,000 gallons. At the same time the percentage of increase in beer production is keeping pace with the percentage of increase in population. This increased consumption of beer in America may in some measure be due to the temperance movement which turns the public toward less intoxicating beverages.

Though for some time business in Japan has suffered from depression and all business enterprises have undergone more or less discouragement, there was no interference with the increasing output and consumption of beer, the average 10% increase being well maintained. In the matter of export the main difficulty is how to

compete with foreign brewing companies. Japanese beer is now exported to Manchuria, North and Central China, Asiatic Russia and the South Sea islands, in all of which places foreign beer is on sale at prices which is very difficult for Japanese beer to meet. The Most formidable competitors on the continent of Asia are the Union Brewing Company at Shanghai, and the Tsintau Brewing Company at Tsintau. The Dai Nippon Brewery Company has a branch office at Shanghai, which has been remarkably successful in forcing the rival companies to lower their prices; and the company has so far extended its trade in China that now some two-thirds of the keg beer business are in its hands. The Japanese company is also making marked progress toward monopolizing the trade in bottled beer. In South China Japanese beer is making successful inroads on German preserves, which, have been largely in the hands of the Oriental Brewing Company, a German concern at Hongkong. In Singapore as well as throughout the Malay peninsula, and in Java, Borneo and Sumatra, Japanese beer is now making fair progress, finding ready sale everywhere Japanese goods are sent. The export of Japanese goods is therefore showing a gradual but constant increase, and the breweries are preparing to increase their productive capacity in order to meet the demand, Within the next year or so the increase of output will amount to at least 10,000,000 gallons annually.

A difficulty has been the securing of good malt and up to a few years ago the Japanese companies were obliged to depend on Australia and Germany, but now the Dai Nippon Brewery Company is using domestic material altogether, with very satisfactory results. Japan is gradually coming to produce larger and larger crops of barley; and experts have asserted that the quality of the home-made malt is excellent, surpassing even those malts that have hitherto been imported from abroad.