

# OIL & FAT INDUSTRIES

## The Editor's Page

### Legislative Sharpshooting

**A** GAIN we have in Washington a sorry spectacle. The Congress of the United States, in frantic endeavor to impress the voters on the farms, is entertaining all sorts of proposals of discrimination against a sound, healthy food product, prepared in the most scrupulously clean manner, in plants of sanitary construction and operation.

The art and skill of the chemist and chemical engineer have dared to improve the technique of margarine manufacture to the point where the criticisms of the dairy interests are losing weight with the consuming public. Margarine now contains ample amounts of those vitamins said by the High Priests of the Milk Pail to be essential to our well-being. Margarine now has a texture satisfactory for spreading upon our bread at any temperature and under any climatic conditions. Suitable oils have been prepared which, while imparting these desirable properties, also possess, by gift of nature, a natural color not unlike the color imparted to June butter by the healthful grasses of the meadows.

These grasses are *vegetable*, not *animal*, products, and every farmer boy in the land knows that it is only in the months of fresh young grasses that butter comes from the churn with that golden color which is being set up as a fetish by the creamery interests. Everyone who is familiar with creamery practice knows that during nine months of the year those same creamery interests add annatto, a vegetable coloring matter derived from a South American tree, prepared under conditions of doubtful sanitation, and dissolved in cottonseed oil, to their pure cows' product, in order to simulate, for the dear consuming public of whose welfare they are so solicitous, the color of June butter.

Why has the Bureau of Internal Revenue precipitated this agitation at this time? Under the oleomargarine act as written and enforced for many years, the use of ingredients in margarine, (in quantities over ten percent), which impart a natural yellow color has been countenanced without attempts to collect the ten cent per pound tax assessed against artificially colored goods. That the Bureau has ruled out

palm oil in former years has shown only the ignorance of refining technique of those who have made the rulings. Properly refined palm oil was just as wholesome and edible ten years ago as it is today, and in ruling it so the Bureau has only rectified its previous error in the interpretation of the law.

Will our Congress ever learn that they cannot control Nature, Progress and Science by legislation? Who shall say that the products of any one branch of the fatty food industry shall have a Trade Mark or Copyright property in a shade of Nature's colors, freely given to all mankind impartially? In this *free* country of ours, the workingman is now denied the right to buy or make Nature's malt or vinous products, because those who usurp the power of dictation say "Thou shalt not." If this practice is to be extended to those triumphs of creative science which contribute wholesome new products to our domestic economy, let us, by all means, return to the days of feudal seigneurs and the Inquisition.

### Avoiding the Obvious

**S**OME months ago it was our pleasure to listen to a short informal talk by a successful chemical engineer and patent attorney, who entitled his remarks "The Avoidance of the Obvious." He cited many instances in his experience of apparent effort upon the part of research investigators to find complicated solutions to their problems, resulting in neglect of the simple, effective answers which should have been obvious.

The cottonseed crushing industry of this country seems in a fair way to furnish a parallel example.

At great expense of time and effort, a committee of the National Cottonseed Products Association has discovered and now announces that the crushing capacity of the country so far exceeds the amount of cottonseed available that the average utilization of facilities for the past three years has been 38 per cent of capacity. The committee has also shown, by careful analysis of indisputable data, that those mills which have made any sort of profit whatever have been those which have been operated at

the greatest percentage of their capacity. These facts are incontrovertible and must be admitted, but wherein lies the remedy?

Shall the mills continue their ruthless competition of the past few years, all losing money, (or making less than simple bank interest on their investment), until the weaker units are driven to the inevitable end of all marginal producers? Shall the producers of cottonseed oil attempt to sell their products only at prices that will fully meet all the Idle Plant Charges that must be imposed for equipment which stands rusting over half the time when it should be doing useful work, thus inviting and giving an advantage to the competition of oils other than cottonseed?

The answer, as hinted in our title line, is surely obvious. The cottonseed crushers of the South *must* awaken to the fact that an oil mill is an *oil* mill, not a cottonseed oil mill. They must look beyond the borders of their adjacent cotton fields for raw materials with which to keep their rolls turning, their cookers steaming and their presses rising. That this is possible has been demonstrated for many years by all the oil mills of Europe, where native raw material is almost entirely lacking, but where great mills keep in operation throughout the year entirely on varieties of imported seeds and nuts. If we cannot produce tropical oil-bearing seeds in this country we can surely best meet their competition by importing them for the winning of their oil in our machinery.

Any cottonseed oil mill can be adapted, at slight cost, to the alternative handling of a variety of products other than cottonseed, without in any way impairing its efficiency in operation on its available quota of that seed. Where else is to be found the salvation of the business?

### Procter & Gamble Earnings Increase

Procter & Gamble Co., Cincinnati, earned \$12,194,732 during the six months ended December 31, 1930, after depreciation charges and advertising expense. This was equal to \$1.90 a share on the 6,410,000 common shares outstanding June 30, 1930, and compared with earnings of \$10,811,000 for the first six months of the year. During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1930, the company earned \$22,450,600, or \$3.38 a share on the common stock outstanding. The increase in earnings during the last half of the year was partially attributed in financial circles to economies effected through the acquisition of James S. Kirk & Co. early in July of 1930. It was also

due, no doubt, to a continued decline in prices of fats, oils, perfuming materials and chemicals during the second half of the year.

### Shortening and Oil Prices

Prices of shortening and salad and cooking oils on Thursday, January 29, 1931, based on sales made by member companies of the Shortening and Oil Division of the National Cottonseed Products Association, were as follows:

<b>Shortening</b>		Per lb.
North and Northeast:		
Carlots, 26,000 lbs. ....		@10
3,500 lbs. and up .....		@10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Less than 3,500 lbs. ....		@10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Southeast:		
3,500 lbs. ....		@ 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
Less than 3,500 lbs. ....		@10 $\frac{3}{4}$
Southwest:		
Carlots, 26,000 lbs. ....		@ 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
10,000 lbs. and up .....		@ 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
Less than 10,000 lbs. ....		@10 $\frac{3}{4}$
<b>Salad Oil</b>		
North and Northeast:		
Carlots, 26,000 lbs. ....		@10
5 bbls. and up .....		@10 $\frac{3}{4}$
1 to 4 bbls. ....		@10 $\frac{3}{4}$
South:		
Carlots, 26,000 lbs. ....		@ 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
Less than carlots .....		@10

#### Cooking Oil—White

$\frac{1}{8}$ c per lb. less than salad oil.

#### Cooking Oil—Yellow

$\frac{1}{4}$ c per lb. less than salad oil.

The cooking fats most in demand in the Netherlands East Indies are coconut and peanut oils and pork fat, all of local production. It is therefore not surprising that foreign cooking fats do not attain wide popularity. Margarine is used by Europeans in the "Outer Possessions" for cooking purposes and sells at a lower price than lard. The "Outer Possessions" embrace all the islands of the Netherlands East Indies except Java and Madura. Practically all the margarine used is imported from the Netherlands.