

OIL & FAT INDUSTRIES

The Editor's Page

A National Association

THE Interstate Cottonseed Crushers Association and the Texas Cottonseed Crushers Association have taken most of the steps necessary for a combination of the two bodies, and will hold a joint meeting this month for the formation of The National Cottonseed Products Association, which is designed to include all crushers and refiners of cottonseed oil and all manufacturers of and brokers in cottonseed products, from hulls and linters to salad oil and shortening. This is a splendid step in the right direction and should have the support of all interested in the progress of American oil and fat industries.

The move will not be complete, however, until the growth of industries crushing other oil-bearing materials than cottonseed, and manufacturing developed products thereof, is fully recognized by the association. The corn oil production of the Middle West, the coconut crushing of the Pacific Coast and the linseed industry of the Atlantic Seaboard and Middle West should all be encouraged to join the cottonseed crushing interests for mutual benefit and protection. The cultivation of soya beans for oil is growing by leaps and bounds in this country and it will be a matter of only a few short years before the production of tung oil in Florida will have an important place in the country's economy.

Bearing in mind all these facts, the present is the time that those who are guiding the destinies of the great cottonseed associations, should strive to make their amalgamation truly National in scope, by inviting the membership of these other vegetable oil producers and refiners. To this end, we suggest as more appropriate names, "*The National Seed Oils and Products Association*" or "*The National Vegetable Oils and Products Association*."

Progress and Obsolescence

THE management of the most outstandingly successful edible oil and products businesses at present active in this country has adopted the rule of carrying all physical equipment of its various factories and distributing plants on the company's books at the valuation of just *one dollar*. This may possibly be construed as an instance of developing the idea of mak-

ing ample depreciation charges beyond the point of reason. This particular organization, however, is thereby placed in the most favorable position possible to enable it to take advantage of new discoveries and inventions in the technique of its line.

Progress in the reduction of producing costs and the improvement of quality of products is undoubtedly greatly furthered by such a policy. Those plants, on the other hand, which are deterred from the adoption of new equipment and methods because of the strain which would be placed upon their balance sheets by the junking of a large value in undepreciated or inadequately depreciated equipment, are bound to eventually become marginal producers, for the advanced methods will be inevitably adopted by some competitor, either one already in the field, or a new one, entering without the handicap of a large investment in superseded plant.

Many examples of such a situation may be gleaned from a study of the chemical and allied industries. One of outstanding notes is evidenced by the inability of the wood distillation industry to compete on favorable terms in the production of wood alcohol with the synthetic methanol process. The petroleum refining industry a few years ago was called upon to discard all its old standard distillation equipment and practice in favor of the pressure-still cracking process. This constant obsolescence of old methods and machinery by the discovery of improvements and advancements has been the very epitome of America's progress and will continue to play an ever enlarging role in the future. The law is effective even as between Nations, as will be readily recalled by those who remember the fate of the Indian indigo crop, after the perfection of synthetic indigo.

The fatty oil and soap industries in the United States at this moment are facing a situation which is full of possibility of making many million dollars worth of equipment valueless almost overnight. European chemists have developed several new processes to the point where they at least threaten the stability of our plant investments. The fermentation process for the production of glycerin has not yet been proven cheaper than the concentration and purification of soap lyes, but it has ad-

vanced sufficiently at least to demand extreme watchfulness on the part of all American producers of soap-lye or saponification glycerin.

In Europe certain oils are never expressed from the seeds in which they are developed, but are always obtained by solvent extraction, the soya bean oil being an outstanding example. Solvent extraction methods are being developed with rapidity, and new solvents are appearing on the market with increasing frequency. It is to be hoped that American operators of crushing mills for all kinds of oil-bearing materials will not fail to see to it that their depreciation charges on their plant equipment keep pace; not only with the age of their equipment, but with the collateral progress of invention as well.

Mart Smith Protests Wood Oil Tariff

IN A LETTER to the consumers of China wood oil in this country H. Mart Smith, president of the Oriental Oils Association, urged an immediate protest against the proposed tariff on this oil. In part Mr. Smith said:

"Various farm organizations, through their Washington representatives, recently appeared before the House Ways and Means Committee, asking that all vegetable oils be made dutiable at certain specific rates, but not less than 45 per cent ad valorem. Included in this schedule was China wood oil (otherwise known as tung oil), on which they asked a duty of 5.9c per pound, but not less than 45 per cent ad valorem, the highest rate asked on any vegetable oil.

"Whether duties on vegetable oils that can be used for edible purposes might help some of our farmers, is a debatable question, but as applied to China wood oil, there can be no question but that it would be a distinct detriment to the farmer as well as to the many industries using China wood oil; not a single farmer in the United States could get the slightest benefit from a duty imposed on this oil for the following reasons:

"1. The oil is not produced commercially in the United States and will not be for many years to come. The American Tung Oil Corporation, which is interested in American production, has so stated in its brief to the House Ways and Means Committee and has asked that China wood oil be retained on the free list.

"2. There is no oil produced in the United States which is in any way similar to China wood oil, or that can be used as a real substitute for it.

"3. It is indispensable in the manufacture of high grade varnishes in which about 30 per cent of the American produced rosin is used. Without China wood oil it would be impossible to produce high grade varnishes with rosin.

"4. China wood oil cannot be used in the manufacture of soap and it cannot be used for edible purposes under any circumstances as the oil itself is toxic.

"5. China wood oil does not compete even remotely with any American farm product. It has consistently sold at a price from 5c to 15c per pound higher than linseed oil and irrespective of its price level, is used in increasing volume year after year.

"There has not been a single reason advanced by the proponents of this duty on China wood oil, how or why a duty on China wood oil would in any way help the American farmer."

Editor's Note: The new tariff as passed by the House of Representatives provides for the maintenance of China Wood oil on the free list, and it is to be hoped that the Senate will not change this item.

The Milani test for the purity of olive oil, which depends on the decolorization of eosin, is said to be non-specific for genuineness or purity, because eosin is decolorized by weak acids. Olive oils to which sufficient oleic acid was added to make the acidity 4 per cent in each case all gave a rose color with the Milani reagent, which color vanished on heating. Therefore some olive oils decolorize eosin not because of a reaction with a substance that is present in olive oil and not in other oils, but because of their acidity. This is further confirmed by the fact that pure oleic acid decolorizes the Milani reagent. *Ann. Chim. Applicata* 18, 297-9 (1928).

A proposed simplification in the refining of edible oils offers to eliminate the washing step by the addition of asbestos fiber to the oil, (after settling the soap stock), and subsequent filtration of the oil through a special filter-press where the asbestos is deposited as a paper-thin film, retaining all the remaining impurities. *Seifensieder-Ztg.* 55, 4289 (1928).

Editor's Note: This is somewhat reminiscent of the well-known Baskerville process, which was patented in this country several years ago.

The Toledo Seed & Oil Company, Toledo, Ohio, will extend its operations to include soya bean crushing. No change in plant or equipment is contemplated beyond the installation of a machine to clean the beans.