

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-