

# 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