

# President Irwin's Convention Address

*Oil Chemists' Leader Stresses Need of Increasing Membership  
and Revising Procedure in Adoption of Methods*

By W. H. IRWIN, *Retiring President*

**F**ELLOW Members of the American Oil Chemists' Society, Guests, and Friends: It has been customary, for many years, for the President of the Society to make an address at the Spring Meeting. I am not sure whether the thought in this is to punish the President or the members of the Society. It probably serves both purposes.

My address today will consist principally of a review of the progress of the Society and recommendations for certain changes in our procedure, etc. The year 1930-31 has been a strenuous one in more ways than one. However, I think our Society has made satisfactory progress under the circumstances. Our membership has remained about the same as the preceding year, and our finances, as shown by the treasurer's report, are in good shape.

## *Organization*

**I** BELIEVE most of you are familiar with the fact that our Society was organized in 1909 with Felix Paquin as first president, and was known as the Society of Cotton Products Analysts. Later it was decided to expand our activities and to include the study of methods for all vegetable and animal oils and fats. In 1920 the name of the Society was changed to the American Oil Chemists' Society, and in 1927, at the suggestion of the president, Mr. H. P. Trevithick, a Fall Meeting was authorized by the Governing Board. At this meeting, held in New York City, a Soap Section of the Society was organized, thus further expanding the activities of our Society.

The expansion of the activities of our Society, however, has not resulted in the increase in membership which we had reason to expect. The fault probably lies in the fact that there has been no concerted effort to increase our membership. There are hundreds of chemists



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engaged in oil, fat and soap work who are not members of our organization. I believe that many of them would willingly join if they were invited to do so by a member of the Society. I therefore suggest, for the consideration of the next Membership Committee, that it might be a good plan to obtain a list of the various manufacturers engaged in the oil, fat and soap industries and have a thorough canvass made of their laboratories with a view of increasing

our membership and thus enabling us to do more and better work along oil, fat and soap lines.

In endeavoring to interest other organizations in our Society I wrote to Mr. Glenn H. Pickard, President of the National Soybean Manufacturers' Association, inviting the chemists of their organization to join our Society and suggested the adoption of our methods as the Official Methods of their organization. Mr. Pickard replied as follows:

"I have looked over the methods of analysis and find that for the most part they check exactly with the ones that we are using. I see absolutely no reason why the National Soybean Manufacturers' Association cannot, in their specifications, define their methods as those of the American Oil Chemists' Society. All I can say at this time is that at the next meeting of the Standards Committee I will present the matter to the members and will have copies of the methods of the Oil Chemists' Society with me."

There have been, in times past, a number of suggestions that our body should become a section of the American Chemical Society, and while I believe every chemist should belong to the American Chemical Society, I think it would be a grave mistake for the American Oil Chemists' Society to affiliate itself with the American Chemical Society. The American Chemical Society is so enormous at the present time and its activities are so varied that we would be lost sight of and would not be able to accomplish what we have and are accomplishing as an independent organization. Therefore, it is my thought that we should endeavor to increase the number of members in our own organization rather than to affiliate with the American Chemical Society.

#### *Meetings*

AT THE present time provision is made in our constitution and by-laws for only one meeting of the Society each year, but by vote of the Board of Governors a Fall Meeting has been authorized for the past four years. This Fall the Society held its Fall Meeting in Chicago. At this meeting we had a very large attendance and much interest was taken in the many interesting papers given. It is my thought that, in view of the interest displayed in the Fall Meetings, the Society should make provision for a regular Fall Meeting of the Society. The meeting should be held preferably somewhere in the Middle West in order to attract chemists from all parts of the country. It should also be given the same powers for the adoption of methods, etc., as the Spring Meeting.

I also think the Spring Meeting can be made more interesting if we arrange to have our Committee Reports printed in the April issue of *Oil and Fat Industries*. This will afford each member of the Society an opportunity to read and be prepared to criticize the methods when they are offered for adoption. It would then only be necessary for the Committee Chairman to read a synopsis of the work and the recommendations of his Committee. This plan would not only permit of more deliberate action in the adoption of methods, but would also result in giving us more time on our program for papers of interest to the industry.

#### *Methods*

THE machinery and mode for the adoption of chemical methods is not all that could be desired. Many times, through necessity, we adopt methods as Official Methods, which have not been given as thorough a study as they should receive. For example, the Seed Grading Plan which was put into effect last year has resulted in a large increase in the amount of chemical work, and certain changes have been found to be necessary in the methods of analysis. This plan, like every other new plan, has encountered considerable opposition and difficulty, but we should all strive to see that our analytical methods are such that differences between laboratories will be few and far between. I therefore wish to recommend to the society that our methods be made tentative for one year before they are adopted as official in order that the proper consideration may be given them before they are included as official in our book of methods.

#### *Referee Board*

IT HAS been suggested by some members of the Society that the Referee Board be abolished in view of the fact that the National Cottonseed Products Association appoints Official Chemists, but I, personally, am not ready to agree that this is a good move. We are an independent scientific society, trying to serve the entire oil and fat industry, and I am sure the Referee Board has served, and still serves, a useful purpose. It is my thought that we should broaden the powers of the Referee Board if necessary, and grant certificates to Referee Chemists not only on vegetable and animal fats and oils, but also on soaps, etc., and soap products. Another point of value is that all Referee Chemists are required to participate in the Smalley Foundation work and this not only gives us a line on the kind of work they are turning out, but also provides some revenue to the American Oil Chemists' Society.

### Color

THE matter of manufacture of satisfactory color glasses in this country should be given prompt attention. The present situation is intolerable and it does not reflect credit on the American chemists to endure the present situation. It is almost impossible to get color glasses in a reasonable length of time and after they are secured the variation is so great that it is necessary to have them standardized, at considerable expense.

I took it upon myself to write one manufacturer of color glasses for Ph work to see whether we could interest them in the manufacture of Lovibond glasses, and have found them eager to cooperate with us in the production of satisfactory color glasses. I think from this point on the matter should be handled by our Color Committee.

In January I received a letter from the President of the Optical Society of America asking me to appoint a delegate to attend a preliminary meeting to be held in New York in February. I appointed Mr. H. P. Trevithick, and Mr. A. P. Lee acted as his alternate. A short report covering this meeting will be given later by Mr. Lee.

### Kreis Test

THE indiscriminate use of the Kreis Test has resulted in the condemnation of many oils and fats which are perfectly sweet and bland. Our Kreis Test Committee will probably have some recommendations to make, but for the information of those present, I wish to quote a resolution adopted by the German Committee on Fat Analysis April 14, 1930 covering their views of the Kreis test.

"Whereas the determination of deterioration (rancidity) is uncertain, and whereas the color reactions now in use for this purpose are unreliable, therefore it is resolved that odor and flavor remain the only decisive tests. Because at the present stage of scientific development no uniform conclusions can be drawn from colorimetric tests as regards the rancidity of fats, therefore none of the now known reactions can be prescribed with responsibility as 'Standard Methods.'"

Some similar action by this body would, in my opinion, have a very beneficial effect on the oil and fat industries.

### Journal

I THINK we all will agree that our Journal, at the present time is making progress, but I think we could all do more than we have done in the past toward the financial success of the Journal. This would enable them to give us

a better Journal by arranging the advertising so that the pagination of scientific numbers is continuous. With this point in view, I recommend that every purchaser of chemical equipment mention the Journal in making purchases and also mention the Journal as an advertising medium to salesmen visiting their laboratories.

In closing my remarks, I wish to thank the Society for the honor conferred upon me and to express my appreciation of the coöperation of all of the Officers and members of the various committees. It has been a pleasure to serve as your President during the past year.

### Summary of Recommendations

1. That the Membership Committee obtain a list of manufacturers engaged in oil, fat, and soap industries and make a thorough canvass of their laboratories with a view of increasing our membership.
2. Authorize a Fall Meeting of the American Oil Chemists' Society as a regular meeting of the Society, this meeting to be held somewhere in the Middle West.
3. Arrange, as far as possible, for the publication of Committee Reports in advance of the meeting in order to allow a more intelligent discussion of methods offered for adoption.
4. Adopt all methods as "tentative" for one year before making "Official."
5. Continue the Referee Board and enlarge its powers.
6. Make a determined effort to have color glasses manufactured in this country under suitable scientific management.
7. Take definite action in the form of a resolution on the inapplicability of the Kreis Test as a criterion of rancidity.

### Lewis Heads Chemists' Club

G. C. Lewis, Vice president of Darco Sales Corporation and Technical Director of Columbian Carbon Company has been elected President of the Chemists' Club of New York for a term of two years, succeeding L. V. Redman, of the Bakelite Corporation.

Experiments in the shipment of oil-containing tropical products in pressed bales are said to have resulted favorably in the case of copra, but very unfavorably in the case of peanuts and that of rubber-seed kernels, as both the latter products suffered from the compression into bales and the free fatty acid content of the oils was considerably increased. *Ber. Adf. Handels. Ver. Kolon. Inst.* No. 56, 28 pp. *Chem. Abstr.* 25,2582, (1931).