

OIL & FAT INDUSTRIES

The Editor's Page

Wanted: A Way Out

THE cottonseed oil milling industry is still seeking its Moses. Almost hopelessly entangled in the wilderness of hostile farmers, unsympathetic federal and state bureaus and legislators, it cries aloud for the manna of *practical* help and for guidance through the Red Sea of depression into the promised land of profits.

All sorts of panaceas for the difficulties of the mills are being prescribed. The latest suggested remedy is contained in a report of examiners of the Interstate Commerce Commission, recommending a revision of all cottonseed and cottonseed products freight rates and a limited form of milling-in-transit rate on cottonseed.

The proposal has resulted in an immediate division of the mills into two camps. The recommendation of the Commission's examiners appears intended to benefit the railroads primarily, but the larger terminal oil mills are favorable to its adoption, as it will permit them to compete on more favorable terms with seed buyers for the smaller mills in local territory. The latter class, naturally, are opposed to the proposition, even though, in its present form, no application of the transit rate to oil and linters is contemplated, seed in, and cake meal and hulls out of the mill being the commodities affected.

Another problem being discussed by the oil millers during this Summer vacation from mill operation is that of organization for trade association. Some members of the National Cottonseed Products Association favor the abandonment of all State Association activities, while others desire to continue the state groups, either as independent organizations or as divisions of the National body.

While all these weighty matters require discussion and adjustment, the mills stand idle, as usual in this between-crop season.

Yet there are quantities of copra, sesame seed, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seeds, etc., if not actually in the country, still readily obtainable to keep the presses and expellers turning out oil. What a reduction of overhead and fixed charge unit costs would be achieved

by every mill, large and small, if year-round operation should be provided for by operating on other oilseeds during the closed season for cottonseed.

A Whale of a Problem

THE storage tanks of Norway are overflowing with the surplus of last season's whale oil production. Practically all of the Norwegian whaling companies have agreed to suspend operations for a period of one year to enable the world demand to catch up to the supply of whale oil, and to endeavor, in the meantime, to market the huge surplus at prices which will at least pay the cost of production.

Whale oil, chiefly because of the efforts and discoveries of chemists in the field of hydrogenation, has again become a staple world commodity. Its utility is many times what it was in the old days of the New Bedford sailors, when it could be used only in lamps and for lubrication. Today, after suitable treatment and when blended properly with other fats, it is a satisfactory ingredient for soaps of the highest class. In Europe it is used extensively in margarine, and its use in such a way in this country has been approved recently by that deputy arbiter of the American margarine industry, the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Refined and hydrogenated whale oil is a clean, wholesome, sweet fat, and it is to be sincerely hoped that the real overseers of the margarine industry, our National Congress, will not hastily pass another law reversing the decision of their deputy and holding that this product of the sea may not be used in our kitchens because it comes from the wrong variety of cattle.

The hydrogenated product will also make a most satisfactory shortening product, particularly when blended with other fats. If some of our large shortening manufacturers had not spent such huge sums in past years to advertise their products as purely vegetable, many of us would be cooking with whale oil today, whether or not we were aware of the fact.