

## THE BECK BILL

By J. S. ABBOTT

Representative Beck of Wisconsin has introduced into Congress a bill relating to margarine. It is H. R. 5188. According to interviews reported to have been had with Mr. Beck, the bill is intended to put the margarine industry out of business. The purpose of such a drastic effort, according to the reports of these interviews, is to help the dairy industry. The destruction of the margarine industry would help the dairy industry, according to Mr. Beck, by eliminating the consumption of two hundred and fifty million pounds of margarine annually and, therefore, increase the demand for butter to such an extent that its price would be increased.

Dollar butter is the goal apparently of the enemies of margarine. It does not make any difference what sort of hardship this would be to consumers of butter and of margarine. The main thing is to make people pay for their milk and butter. There have been hundreds of editorials in as many newspapers of the country to the effect that this is the purpose of all of this opposition to margarine.

It is well known that margarine is a pure and wholesome article of food. It is also well known that it is made of farm products. It is sold in harmony with city, state and federal laws designed to regulate the manufacture and sale of foods and to prevent any fraud and deception in the sale of such products. In a recent Wisconsin court decision, the court announced as one of its Findings of Facts that there is no fraud in the manufacture and sale of margarine in Wisconsin.

It is perfectly well known that there is no fraud problem and no public health problem in the manufacture and sale of margarine. The only objection to it is that it competes with butter. The butter manufacturers apparently don't want this competition.

The Beck bill provides, among other things, that manufacturers and wholesale dealers in margarine shall be taxed \$1,000 per annum. It also provides that all margarine be taxed 10 cents per pound. It also provides that retail margarine dealers shall be taxed \$100 per annum. Such taxes would of course be equivalent to an outright prohibition of the manufacture and sale of margarine.

The prohibition of the manufacture and sale of margarine is an injustice upon the consumers of the product. It is also an injustice upon the consumers of butter. It would help a very small per cent of the population of this country engaged in the butter business. It would be a hardship upon more than 90 per cent of the people of this country who are eating butter and margarine and who would have to pay a consequently higher price for butter if margarine were eliminated.

**INSTITUTE OF MARGARINE MANUFACTURERS**

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