OIL & FAT INDUSTRIES

The Editor's Page

Anniversary

WE MORTALS are prone to gauge life by yardsticks, and by milestones. The yardstick of time is the year and its milestone may be said to be the decade. As at the end of each year we are given to review the year's accomplishments, so at the close of a decade, we are so much more liable to pause for a summary, to determine whether our struggles and efforts for progress have borne fruit during the period, or merely thistles.

This year marks the close of the second decade of existence of the American Oil Chemists' Society, and the members are invited to pause a while and consider whether the Society has meant progress in their professions for them, individually, for the industries which give them employment, for chemistry in general, and for oil chemistry in particular.

When, twenty years ago, a little group of chemists associated with the cottonseed oil industry met to found the Society, the science of chemistry, as applied to the oils and fats, was little known and less practiced in this country. There were a few chemists working on the problems of refining oils for edible purposes, and some of the very largest of American soapmakers had laboratory control of a sort for their factories. The constitution and structure of fats was little understood, however, and the composition of the various individual natural oils was clouded by many conjectures. Methods of analysis were those preferred by each chemist using them, and agreement of results between laboratories was a matter of fortuitous chance, rather than of certainty. Methods in factory work were less certain, even, than those of the laboratory. Manufacturers thought they possessed secrets from their competitors and taught their chemists and other employees to be chary of discussion.

Despite these conditions, a small number of forward-looking chemists had the courage to found their society for mutual interchange of ideas, and from this limited beginning the American Oil Chemists' Society has steadily progressed and has grown to be a most important factor in the industries which employ oils and fats in their manufacturing processes. To review only a few of the accomplishments of the Society: The Smalley Foundation has placed the methods of analysis for oil and ammonia in feedstuffs and fertilizers on the basis of better than 99.95 percent accuracy as between laboratories. This has been accomplished by many years of earnest cooperation in analytical work. The color reading of oils and fats has been standardized by careful investigation, with the splendid cooperation of the U. S. Bureau of Standards. The composition and uses of many fats, old and new to our knowledge, have been studied by the laboratories of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and by others among the Society's members, and the findings published in the Official Journal of the Society. The Society has published its complete standardized methods for fat and oil analysis (prepared in collaboration with the American Chemical Society).

The advances in the technology of oils and fats in this country during the past twenty years have been great indeed and in practically every case have been developed by members of the Society. This Society deserves the support of every chemist and every manufacturer who is interested in the chemistry and technology of oils and fats.

Food Fat Containers

ALTHOUGH there has been considerable progress in packaging fatty food products, along with other foodstuffs, during the past ten years or so, much that is desirable from the angle of preservation and sanitation, and in distribution and sales can still be done. As with innumerable other foodstuffs, the great part of development attention which cooking fats, shortening fats, salad oils, margarin, butter, lard and other products of like nature have received during recent years, has been devoted to improving and perfecting the product itself. There have been some notable exceptions, but on the whole, the container, the can, pail, carton, jar or bottle, and its closure have not received attention in proportion to their importance.

In some classes of foodstuffs, none is sold unpackaged. In other classes, the march of package progress is steadily eliminating the sale of bulk goods in retail channels. There is no need to go over and over the advantages of the packaged article. Take the case of lard and

compare the open tub in the grocery store with the cartoned product or with the sealed can free from contamination and retaining all original characteristics of color and flavor. The same comparison holds throughout the entire list.

The consumer likes to receive foodstuffs above all other products in the most attractive form. Appearance is either a tremendous asset in sales or it is a distinct liability. An attractive can or pail, clean-looking, which reveals the product in its original snowy whiteness when opened, is demanded. Bad looking containers are being replaced and improved. Closures are being improved. They must seal and reseal with the minimum of effort. Trick closures, closures with sharp cutting edges, leaky closures, pouring spouts which spill—they too are being eliminated.

Among the packagers of fatty food products, a few have adopted the most modern refinements. The majority however, are still far in the rear in the parade of packages. To this subject, a lot more thought will have to be given over the next year or two by those who would keep their products up in the front line in retail competition. In this issue of *Oil & Fat Industries*, there is a discussion of lard packaging which is well worth reading for it bears on a subject which has become vitally important in the present day sale of foodstuffs through retail channels.

Fellowships for Oil Mill Students

For the purpose of furthering scientific study in cotton oil milling, graduate work is offered by the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering of the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College. At a recent meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, the executive committee of the Interstate Cotton Seed Crushers' Association granted to the A. & M. College of Texas, two graduate fellowships. J. Campbell Jones of the Abilene Cotton Oil Company, Abilene, Texas, also granted one and S. W. Wilbor, of the Southland Cotton Oil Company, Paris, Texas, granted one.

Industrial Donates Golf Trophy

The Golf Tournament Committee of the American Oil Chemist's Society announces the donation of a beautiful Challenge Trophy, in the form of a 31 inch silver loving cup, by the Industrial Chemical Sales Company, of New York and Chicago. The cup will be awarded to the winner of the 1929 annual golf tournament, to be held at the time of the New Orleans convention, May 13th and 14th, and will be presented with appropriate ceremonies by President Putland at the annual banquet on May 14th. The name of the winner and the year will be engraved upon the cup, which will be held as the champion's property until the 1930 tournament, when it will become the property of the new champion whose name will be engraved upon it also. Any member winning the cup three times (not necessarily consecutively) will become the permanent possessor of this beautiful trophy.

American Oil Chemists' Society golf championship challenge trophy cup to be competed for the first time at New Orleans May 13th and 14th