

# OIL & FAT INDUSTRIES

## The Editor's Page

### The Situation in Europe—and Here

**I**N THIS issue, we are privileged to publish a summary of the European oil and fat consumption for the first three months of 1930, as reflected by the imports and exports of the principal countries. The outstanding fact shown by the figures is the substitution of whale oil and other fish oils for an important proportion of the leading vegetable oils of European commerce. Next in interest is the apparent condition of actual decline in quantity of the total amount of oils and fats of all kinds consumed by the major European markets.

There can be but one interpretation of such a situation: that there has been a definite decrease in the buying power of the public in those countries which have been so affected. Fat of some kind is an essential part of all diets, and a decrease in the consumption of fats undoubtedly indicates a tightening of the collective purse strings of the buying public.

The inevitable result of decreased European buying is promptly reflected in lower oil and fat prices in this country, which may be verified at the present time by a glance at the market report, showing lower prices for all grades of fats than have been current at any time since the beginning of the recent World War.

Wherein lies the reason? In a place not generally suspected, in our opinion. An analysis of the figures of oils and oil-bearing materials imported for domestic consumption in the various European countries will show that the decline has been most marked in England, Holland and France, and that Germany has shown, on the other hand, a substantial increase in imports available for domestic consumption. A study of the figures of whale oil production and consumption will show immediately that there has been a large net import and production of whale oil in the United Kingdom, in Holland and in Germany. France, on the other hand, has not materially increased her whale oil importation or production, but has benefited by a bumper olive crop,

which has enabled her to reduce her imports of oils and oil-bearing seeds.

It is apparent, therefore, that England and Holland have substituted whale oil and other fish oils for a portion of the vegetable oils which enter into their respective economies, that the consumption of all classes of fats, including the marine fats, is steadily increasing in Germany, and that France is conservatively remaining true to the higher grades of vegetable oils. These conditions have combined to lower world prices of oils and fats at the present time, but it is in order for American consumers to pay strict attention to the progress of Antarctic whaling, for any sudden failure of the whale catch will be followed closely by a marked advance in oil and fat prices.

### Junk!

**A**CCORDING to an engineer well versed in modern plant practice, there is too much machinery and equipment still doing duty in oil and fat refineries, which should long ago have been consigned to the junk pile. Boilers, tanks, kettles, mills, piping, packaging equipment, dryers, and other machinery were mentioned by name. One instance was particularly pointed out, the case of a compound plant, the owners of which had steadfastly refused year after year to put in two much-needed boilers to replace two which had long since outlived their usefulness. They took it out in patching up the old wrecks, until not so long ago, within a few days of each other, the two old-timers gasped their last and refused to make steam any longer. The several weeks delay in replacing them at a time when they were most needed, cost a great deal more in dollars, time, and delayed production than the entire cost of the equipment if it had been put in when first needed.

Break-downs from patched up machinery and equipment are all too common. And it seems that these break-downs always come at