

Annual Report of President Richardson

THERE is nothing more pleasing to the retiring president of an organization than to be able to point with pride to the past year as being truly one of the most successful years in the history of the organization. There is nothing more painful to the membership than to listen to the alibi when the year has been of the opposite kind. On this occasion, your president is denied the privilege of pointing with any unusual pride, but you are spared the pain of listening to the alibi, for the past year of the American Oil Chemists' Society may be classed as a fairly successful one.

There has been some loss of membership, about the number that might be expected in view of business conditions. The activity of our technical committees has fallen somewhat below average, about as much as is natural in view of the mental strain and physical disturbances characteristic of the times. We had to draw upon our surplus to complete the 1931 volume of *Oil and Fat Industries*. There was default of interest on one of our investments. In spite of these losses, we are one of those fortunate societies having left a surplus for future emergencies.

The history of the past year will be told in committee reports, and only two matters will be further mentioned in retrospect.

A very successful fall meeting was held in Chicago, October 29 and 30. The program unfortunately was crowded, but of excellent quality. The registered attendance was 137; exclusive of wives, it was 119, more than one-third the number of our entire membership. The industrial exhibits would have done credit to a meeting many times as large. The good influence of the meeting was far reaching. One of the incidental results was that a number of Chicago residents were prevailed upon to pay their first visit to that fascinating eighth wonder of the scientific world, which no visitor to Chicago ever misses—the Planetarium.

The outstanding event of the Society's year was the discontinuance of *Oil and Fat Indus-*



A. S. Richardson

tries and the beginning of *OIL AND SOAP*. The name of the new journal gives increased recognition to our Soap Section, without compromising the more basic claim of oils and fats to our first consideration.

A new journal is a brave venture in these times, and we must do everything in our power to make it the successful journal that we need in the furtherance of our work. Let us not merely agree in a general way that we should help the journal. Let us do something definite. Get a new subscriber, or better still a new member of the Society. Read the advertisements, give special consideration to the advertisers, and talk the journal to advertising prospects with whom you come in contact. Pass along constructive criticism regarding the journal to our officers, our journal committee, or the publishers.

It happens that Mr. W. H. Irwin was chairman of the local committee in charge of the Fall meeting in Chicago, and also chairman of the Journal committee which made arrangements

for OIL AND SOAP with Gillette Publishing Co. He is entitled to our deepest appreciation for both services. Not to throw all the bouquets in one direction, we must thank also the whole membership of those committees, and the members of the Governing committee for their services.

I personally want also to thank all the active members of the Society for their cooperation, and I thank the Society for giving me the opportunity to serve this past year as your president. If the ability to serve had been as great as the desire, you would have had a much better president.

Let us turn now from the past and think of the present and future. In times like these, both men and organizations find themselves on trial, and must justify their work as never before. What are the aims and what are the services that will justify the continued existence of our Society?

They are written in our constitution, and we may well pause to consider them.

Our purposes are declared to be:

First: To unite fraternally and professionally all chemists in good standing interested in the promotion of the chemistry of fats, oils, waxes and allied industries.

Second: To cultivate and promote friendly relations and interchange of constructive suggestions among the members of the Society, and to bring about a reasonable standardization of equipment, material and method in chemical practice.

Third: To foster and encourage chemical research and the production and distribution of chemical literature.

Fourth: To secure the enactment of laws safeguarding and protecting the practice and dignity of the profession, and to secure for its members adequate recognition of their services; to encourage ethical practices, and to condemn and prevent all conduct of methods prejudicial to the good name or best interests of the chemical profession.

These are not empty phrases. They are purposes which have already been translated into useful work, and their real meaning is proportional to the amount of such work.

We seek to unite all chemists in our field. Last year the president's address emphasized

the word "all." The message of that word is that we should bring into our Society all American chemists interested in fats, fatty oils, and related products. The word "unite" is also to be emphasized. Our selfish interests happen to be conflicting in high degree. Two analytical laboratories in the same territory are competitors. The chemists of rival manufacturing companies are competitors. Conflict of interest arises even between the independent commercial chemist and the refinery or mill chemist. If, in spite of all these unavoidable conflicts of interest, we are to unite ourselves fraternally and professionally, we must avoid the pursuit of selfish advantage within the Society, and must seek the ground of common interest.

On this common ground we must interchange suggestions, bring about reasonable standardization of equipment and of method, and must also promote research. What is our common ground? Without attempting to define it completely and without belittling any part of it, we may safely say that analytical chemistry is the all-important common ground on which all those purposes may be served.

Cooperative committee work on problems of sampling, of analysis, and of tests closely related to analysis has justified the existence of our Society in the past. I bring you the unoriginal message that we must justify our existence in the future by the same means.

Some there are who hold analytical chemistry in low esteem. If any research chemist, so called, or any chemical engineer, so called, thinks that the analytical field is not worthy of the major effort of an important society, his best excuse for continued existence is that, if he were struck dead as he deserves to be, he should lose his last chance of ever becoming an enlightened chemist.

The focal point of our interest shifts from year to year. At times we pay most attention to alkali refining of oils; at another time we are most concerned with analysis of cottonseed; some other year we may concentrate on a problem of sampling. This is a healthy condition, but there is one committee that should be more constantly in our minds, namely, the Fat Analysis committee.

That committee deserves the careful study of

(Continued on page 153.)

Annual Report of Past President Richardson

(Continued from page 140.)

our next president. It started as a committee of the American Chemical Society, and became later a committee of our Society also. In its somewhat detached status, it has done a splendid work. It may henceforth be desirable to have a general committee on fat analysis more closely drawn into the administrative organization of our Society.

In the future, cooperation with other societies will be as desirable as in the past, but it may be questioned if all other technical societies in this country combined will take half the interest in fat analysis which we will take. The American Oil Chemists' Society should become the recognized leader in attacking problems relating to the analysis and the evaluation of all oils and fats of primary interest for use in soap or in edible products. We will not seek prestige for its own sake, but it is doubtful if any other organization will assert sufficient initiative to become the clearing house of suggested methods of fat and oil analysis and the recognized authority on standards.

There is much work ahead for the Fat Analysis committee and all other committees. One of our serious needs is to draw new talent into this work. Possibly we are too prone to appoint the same group of members again and again to our committees. The usual procedure is for the president to confer with the committee chairman; between them, they select the committee. There is no objection to this procedure, but two men have at best a limited acquaintance with the whole membership. Spe-

cifically, two suggestions are offered. In the first place, members should not hesitate to volunteer for committee work. In the second place, the older members should suggest the names of younger or newer members to the president for committee work. Usually such suggestions are greatly appreciated.

I believe that our most serious problem arises from the fact that the services of our officers and of our committee workers are subject to demands that are necessarily prior to the demands of our own work. Especially is it difficult for the average committee chairman to spare the time which he personally thinks the work of the Society deserves. The situation does not improve with the passing years, and I believe it impossible to overemphasize the seriousness of the situation as it applies to committee chairmen.

It is not a simple problem, and I have no practical suggestions to offer. I can only voice faith and hope—faith that our work is worth the time it requires and hope that each example of an active committee worker will inspire others to similar activity.

During the past year a considerable part of the time and energy given to the Society had to be diverted to attempts to rebuild what we had lost in our journal. It is hoped that no similar disturbances will affect the coming years, and that our energies will go increasingly to furthering the work of our technical committees. If this happens, the outcome is almost certain—we will fulfill in a practical way the purposes of our Society, so well expressed in our constitution.

Cuba to Increase Cultivation of Sesame Seed

Stimulated by an almost prohibitive import tariff on vegetable oils and animal fats, Cuba has been making considerable headway in the cultivation of oleaginous seeds. The cultivation of sunflower seed, inaugurated last year, is increasing rapidly.

A new development is the attempt to stimulate the production of sesame seed on a large scale. This attempt is sponsored by a large local manufacturer of compound lard, it being claimed that sesame oil is especially well adapted for the manufacture of compounds.

The local manufacturer has recently circularized all sugar mills, large farmers, etc., offering to purchase any amount which they may raise at a price of 2½ cents a pound, c.i.f. Habana. The circular states that plantings must be made at once and that written agreements for the sale of the resulting crop must be entered into by the grower before the 15th of May. According to information contained in the circular, the yield of sesame seed per caballeria (about 33 1/3 acres) is about 40,000 pounds and the time from planting to harvesting, four months.