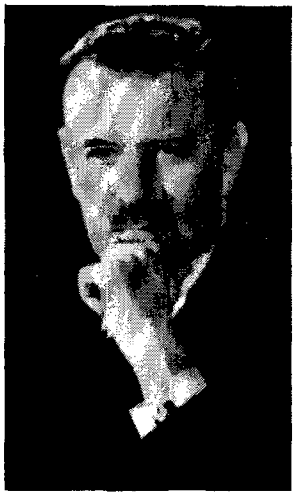
A British View of the American Coating Industry

AS an Englishman who has been privileged to have a long and varied contact with many in the American paint industry, I have been asked by the editor to write some viewpoints as to how an Englishman looks at the American paint industry and how it differs from the British industry. From an engineering angle, affecting methods of production, there is great similarity in the two industries. It is mainly in the materials available that there are great differences. Formulators in one market have wide availability contrasted to great restriction and frustration in the other.



C. G. Heywood

The dislocation of vegetable oil supplies, through the incidence of war, forced the attention of paint formulators on maximum flexibility in the usage of available, and by no means adequate, supplies and set in being a search for other, at that time previously untried, materials.

One technically looks to America for progress, especially in industrial coating materials, as the tempo of mass production in America has undoubtedly determined the type of coating materials called for and the qualifications needed for successful mass industrial utilization. Yet it is in a totally different field—what might be called the more conservative and static field of domestic decoration—that the latest and most startling developments have taken place. I refer to the extraordinary progress made in what you describe as "rubberized paints," the binding medium of which is derived from the latices of styrene-butadiene.

Here, it seems, is a struggle between the products of petroleum technology, on the one hand, and the products of mechanized agriculture on the other. Supply and costs are governed by edibility, which is the volume determining factor.

British wall coating technique has been predominantly for many years by means of what we call "water paint," a product which never seems to have had acceptance in the American field. If the so-called "rubberized" or latex type of paints should enter into the British market, they would have to compete, in cost and performance, not only with the oil base paints but also with these water paints.

In America it would appear that the product which will find the greatest public acceptance will be that which has the greatest appeal to the amateur decorator, due to the high cost of wages and the effect of this upon the cost of a professional paint job.

It is extremely interesting for an onlooker, in Britain, to see what is happening in America and to see the rivalry of the products there for public acceptance. Unquestionably, through the research which is going on in America, the field of utilization will be broadened beyond that of the mere amateur-applied type of coating. Friends of mine in the United States have dramatically stated that the paint industry has changed almost overnight from an empirical one to a chemical one.

AS I am limited in space and the subject matter is so vast, clarity can be enforced by brevity. The British paint industry is going to be sorely handicapped by lack of butadiene if it is to emulate American techniques in the latex type of paints as well as by the regrettable, almost total, lack of soybean oil. Soybean oil, as I see it, is not likely to be outmoded in America and will remain the essential preferred oil for alkyds which, in themselves, will remain the premier, durable, high gloss type of coating available, whether for decorative purposes or industrial purposes.

One factor in popular acceptance of paint in the future will certainly be insistence upon freedom from yellowing. This in itself favors the use of the linoleic-rich oils and is certainly a deterrent to the further use of the linolenic types in all light shades and white paint which appear to predominate.

As a guest speaker at the convention of the American Soybean Association at Des Moines, Iowa, last year I spoke on the relative differences of the American food and drying oil positions as compared to those obtaining in Britain.

I was one of the members of a group which was formed in Britain to study the British drying and semi-drying oil position, the work of which culminated in a book recently published under the title of "Oils for the Paint Industry." In this we endeavored to collate information on many of the lesser known, yet available (though in small quantities), drying and near drying oils within the British Commonwealth, such as *Tetracarpidium conopher* from Nigeria, Nyasaland tung oil, Ceylon and Malayan rubber seed oil, also to study the means of developing oilseed growing in suitable areas within the sterling countries of our Commonwealth.

I feel that the British Commonwealth is lacking in a soybean economy. Within that Commonwealth are large populations that need protein for nutritional purposes, quite apart from the livestock feeding needs, so admirably met by products derived from soy processing. And I still believe that there is no crop which lends itself to the production of protein so advantageously as does the soybean. I have made a study of nutrition and the checking of disease caused by malnutrition in the less favored areas of the earth's surface, and I feel that we Britishers are missing something important in not having progressed more in certain of our territories with the soybean.

(Continued on page 22)

A British View

(Continued from page 4)

I believe that soybean oil will always be a most valuable oil. In the development of "protein" farming some say soybean oil may well become a by-product and, if that is so, there should be available high volumes of this oil and with high volumes one usually obtains a favored economic position in competition with other oils. Besides, students of world population and nutrition positively state that greatly increased quantities of edible fats will be needed under the pressure of world population increase. Soybean oil is not the only oil stock from which edible fats may be obtained, but American example and enterprise are indications of what can be done and the crop would appear to have great adaptability to relatively wide differences of climate and conditions. The need for edible fat in the future is going to demand, from such a rapidly increasing world population, increased fecundity from both soil and sea to make edible fats available in line with the demands which will accrue from population pressure.

What I think is important to realize is that the industrial demand for vegetable oils is not in itself sufficient to stimulate their development. Certainly, insofar as Britain and Western Europe are concerned, it is important for consumers of technical oils to cooperate with the processors of edible oils in the encouraging of interest in the production areas and in the farming communities to make greater quantities of vegetable oils available. This again would tend toward a greater use of the linoleic type oils as compared to the linolenic type.

C. G. HEYWOOD
C. G. Heywood and Partners Ltd.
London, England

Bill for 1953 Dues

THIS month all members of the American Oil Chemists' Society whose dues are payable as of January 1 for the 1953 calendar year will be sent an advance billing. Active and individual associate members pay $8, and corporation associate members, $15. Remittances will be deposited November 1 and thereafter, and the 1953 membership cards will be issued accordingly. If members wish to cooperate with the national headquarters office by paying in advance, the heavy work of dues recording can be spread out more efficiently.

California Chemists to Meet

THE fall meeting of the Northern California Oil Chemists is scheduled for Friday, November 14, at Fables restaurant, 340 Stockton street, San Francisco: cocktails at 6, dinner at 6:30. A program that will interest everyone is being arranged, including a review of the Cincinnati convention. The steering committee for 1953 will be elected.

When NCOC was organized, a stated purpose was to provide an open forum for discussion of matters, either technical or economic, of immediate importance in the oil and fat industries. This feature has been well received and will be continued.

E. B. KESTER.

A.O.C.S. CALENDAR

1952—Cincinnati, Netherland Plaza hotel, Oct. 20-22.
1953—New Orleans, Roosevelt hotel, May 4-6.
Chicago, Sherman hotel, Nov. 2-4.