Hon. George J. Weigle, Dairy and Food Commissioner, of Madison, then addressed the meeting, his subject being

THE OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF THE LICENSING LAW.

By Hon. Geo. J. Weigle, of Madison.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: The matter of licensing cheese factories is not exactly a new idea, nor is it a new invention of the dairy and food commission. The question of putting the manufacturer of dairy products under a licensing system which would give the state closer supervision, was suggested and advocated sixteen years ago by the Wisconsin Dairymen’s Association. A law of this kind was discussed with

Geo. J. Weigle

a great deal of interest and enthusiasm at their annual meetings. Other associations took up the question and the sentiment was all very favorable for such a law, but why a bill of this kind was
never introduced in the legislature, I do not know. Probably no one wanted to take the initiative, for to introduce a bill of this kind meant hard work.

However, your dairy and food department saw the merits of a law of this kind and took steps to have a bill introduced in the legislature which would require manufacturers of butter and cheese, as well as butter and cheese makers, to operate under a state license.

The bill which is now a law was the best we could get and in my opinion is one of the best pieces of construction legislation for the betterment of the dairy industry of Wisconsin ever passed by a legislature.

_A New Era in the Dairy Industry._

The new law marks a beginning of a new era in the dairy industry of Wisconsin. It is going to bring out the best that is in us. It creates no hardship. All it demands is character, ability and cleanliness, the three virtues every man who manufactures food for human consumption should have.

The license law is only after one person—the person who conducts a place unfit for the manufacture of a food product. The clean, sanitary factory or operator has nothing to fear from the operation of the new law. The operator of such a factory is protected against the operator of a factory which is turning out a product which is unfit to eat or which is not a credit to this great state.

In the past, we regret to say, some operators have preferred to pay a fine than to turn out a good and wholesome product. Now some fellows can be put out of business by the refusal of the dairy and food commissioner to issue them a license.

Another object of the new law is to bring about a better condition in the cheese and butter industry. It is going to eliminate the undesirable and weed out those that lack experience and ability.

The maker is going to work under better sanitary conditions and in a factory where it is going to be a pleasure to work and where he can produce a better product.
It is the first time in the history of the state that he has been given by the law the title of buttermaker and cheesemaker. Heretofore there was no chance of distinction. Any one could say "I am a buttermaker" or "I am a cheesemaker." But under the new law he must have certain experience and qualifications as prescribed under our rules and regulations. A buttermaker must have twenty-four months' experience or its equivalent, and a cheesemaker twelve months of actual experience or its equivalent. It is going to put your profession upon a higher plane,—recognized by law as a profession.

Enforcement of Law Facilitated.

Another object and purpose of the new law is to facilitate better enforcement of the laws relating to the operation of butter and cheese factories and to the products there manufactured. It is safe to assume that since the bill was signed by the governor, more people have studied the dairy laws than ever before. Too large a number of operators and makers were not familiar with the dairy laws. In some cases they did not know when a violation occurred, or if they read the law it did not go home with sufficient force to make much of an impression.

For ten years the dairy and food commission, the dairy school and other allied interests have done good work. The inspectors work early and late to better conditions. Many prosecutions were made. Some were fined, once, twice, three, yes, four and five times, and yet returned to their places of business no better operator or maker.

Your dairy and food commissioner took notice of the condition existing and in conjunction with the licensing law began to institute an educational campaign, for we believe, first, that the people should be acquainted with the law, and, second, that they should be shown the necessity of the law, and, third, that through an educational campaign we may develop obedience. If after all these violations continue, we shall prosecute without fear or favor. We believe this should be the policy of the dairy and food commissioner.
Our success has been remarkable, for everywhere in the state there has been a hustle and bustle to clean up and we are receiving many letters of encouragement from all over the state and outside of the state. As one man said “Wisconsin will be proud of our cheese factories and creameries and her butter-makers and cheesemakers.”

Other states are watching us to see how the law is going to work out, and I can assure you they are going to follow suit very shortly.

The Production of Higher Quality Products, Object.

However, the real primary object and purpose of the law is to produce a better and higher quality of products, to bring about a standardization of Wisconsin butter and cheese, and to establish a Wisconsin brand, an object at which every state is aiming at the present time.

State Brand.

Under the Wisconsin law a state brand is possible and it is one of the features that will be developed in the near future.

At present to the consumer cheese is simply cheese and butter is butter because it was bought at the nearby grocery store. When the good is separated from the inferior article by authority of the state, such a demand will be created for our dairy products that every manufacturer will strive for quality and not quantity.

Future Development.

We must look to the future. Other countries are developing their dairy industry very rapidly. Our western states that heretofore did very little in dairying are now going into that industry very extensively. Take the state of California and the great progress that state has made within the last five years. Foreign countries are competing with our butter everywhere. So, I say, let Wisconsin be prepared to compete with any country in the world in quality.
The purpose of production is consumption. When there is an universal difficulty in disposing of our product, the chief cause is not so much overproduction as underconsumption. There are two reasons for this. One is that men want the product but they cannot in turn dispose of their service and consequently lack purchasing power. The other reason is, and which I consider the main one, that where the product manufactured is not of good quality, the demand for this product immediately ceases. Hence, your underconsumption. If you want to increase the sale of your product you must give people what they want. That is common sense. And when you have established a Wisconsin quality brand you need not fear competition, for you have made an indelible impression with the consumer which cannot easily be erased.

*Benefit of the License Law to Makers.*

Wisconsin butter and cheese makers do not realize the great benefit derived from the licensing law. If it is known throughout the country that Wisconsin butter and cheese is made under state supervision as to cleanliness and sanitary condition, the demand for our product will be such that it will be impossible to supply it.

The fundamental fact is: What Ought to be Done Can be Done, And we can do it.

We are going to have a convention at Minneapolis next fall; I hope every buttermaker will be there. We want to capture the banner Minnesota has held and bring it with us next fall, and I am sure we can get it if we have determination. Napoleon once said “Determination is what brings you out,” but we must have the will. We have the will if we will only use it. Let us crank our engine. We will win. We will make Determination our battle-cry. I thank you. (Great applause).

By the President: I don’t think we had better take up the time in discussion now, as Mr. Lee’s speech is to follow, and as they are on similar lines, we will defer the open discussion until the end of his speech.