Report of WISCONSIN BUTTER MAKER'S CONVENTION

October 7,8,9, 1941

The meeting called to order at 8:15 on Tuesday evening, October 7, 1941, by the President Lacy Dickey of Glenwood City, Wisconsin. The President then introduced Reverend Peters of the Trinity Lutheran Church of La Crosse, who gave the invocation.

Mr. Hugh Corbett, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of La Crosse was called upon to give the address of welcome. Mr. Corbett said: "I am pinch hitting for Mayor Verchota who on account of a council meeting was unable to be present. We welcome you to La Crosse, and we hope you will have an enjoyable time while here. La Crosse is a fine city, and we hope you will like it. There is only one town that I want you to think more of and that is your own home town. I hope at the conclusion of your convention, you will feel that you have gained something of value in your particular business that has made it worth while, and that you will feel you are a better butter maker because you attended this conference.

Your program looks to me like a university extension course in butter making, packed as full of useful information as three days can possibly hold.

The response to Mr. Corbett's welcome was given by Mr. Reuben Eirschele of Holmen, Wisconsin, who said: "We have looked forward to this visit to La Crosse. I thank you in behalf of the Butter Makers and their friends for the friendship and courtesy you have extended us."
President Dickey was then called upon by the Secretary Mr. Edward Echwright of Spooner, Wisconsin to give his annual address. The president's address was as follows: "I couldn't make a speech if I tried, and I know there are many things that you would rather do than sit here and listen to me. In order that you may do these things you wish to do, I shall get right along with my speech. I am familiar with the fact that Minnesota and Wisconsin Butter Makers convention dates are the same this year. That is through no fault of the officers or the organization, the dates are set by the By-Laws. It would be rather difficult to have changed the dates for many reasons: (1) The advertising has been out for many months. (2) Reservations have been made at hotels by people intending to come to this convention. (3) Last year the convention was on the 1st and that didn't work out so well. (4) Instead of moving it back to the 1st it was suggested that we move it forward to the fifteenth, but again that is not so good either. We suggested that they change their dates, but their reply was that they could get their hotel only for the dates of October 7, 8, 9, 1941. So the fact remains that the Minnesota and Wisconsin conventions are now in progress on the same dates.

We are gathered here tonight for the 41st annual convention of the Wisconsin Butter Makers Association. Some of us can think back to the time that this organization was started in 1900. When we think back that far we realize that there has been some very great changes in this dairy game of ours. From whole milk to separated cream and then back to whole milk. At the present time it seems that the separator is passing out and whole milk is coming in. The world moves in cycles and so does the dairy industry.

The dairy industry at the present time is confronted with some of the stiffest problems it has had to face in a long time—diversion of milk and Oleo competition, wages and hours, and quality improvements. As far as the diversion of
milk is concerned, the main trouble is that cheese, condensed milk, and powdered milk is what the government now wants. Wisconsin has been called upon for a larger percentage of increase and diversion than any other state. What we need at the present time is price equalization between the three principle dairy products to enable the creameries to make butter and powdered milk and be able to meet competition from plants making cheese or condensed milk. This price equalization will depend entirely upon the quantity of each product available and the demand by the government for that product. Condensed milk is the best bet at the present time although, the government is not getting the powdered milk nearly fast enough and the price may have to be increased to fill the demand.

As far as butter is concerned, let us hope that our good friends Mr. Ammon and his committee through their efforts in Washington have convinced Mr. Paul McNutt that his ideas in regard to Oleomargarine and his recent ruling are no good. I have just learned that their has been a bill introduced into the Senate that the navy be allowed to use Oleo instead of butter. There is every chance of its being passed.

After fighting Oleo legislation and competition for forty years, we cannot take this slap in the face without fighting back and at least try to make the Oleo people sell their product for what it is, OLEOMARGARINE, and not a product doctored up to look, taste, and resemble butter and in too many cases be sold to the unsuspecting customer for creamery butter and at the price of creamery butter.

The cold storage holdings for the U. S. August 31, was over 200,500,000# of butter. The Oleomargarine manufacturers can't come out and say that we do not have the butter to supply the demand and that the recent ruling was necessary to provide Oleo to meet the demand for butter.
Another great mistake in the past is that creameries have overpaid and laid away no reserves to take care of depreciation and expansion of the plant if necessary. Competition has been so keen that the effort to keep up with someone else has put them in a tough spot, and now that competition is keener than ever, there is still the temptation to struggle along that same line.

The management of all dairy plants should keep their feet on the ground and pay a price for milk or cream that will net them a profit after all manufacturing costs are paid so that they can lay away a reserve for the future. What that future will bring us and what problems we will have to face no one can tell. But for the present, if competition is such that plants must run at a loss to meet that competition, then it is better to close the plant for lack of patronage rather than having to close it for lack of money.

Another matter that has in the past and will in the future come in for a lot of discussing is the Wage and Hour Law. There is a growing demand for an amendment to the Wage and Hour Law to clear up the measure by definitely excluding from its provisions all employees of plants which process or market agricultural products. This is the result of the arbitrary and unreasonable manner in which it has been enforced in some cases.

As far as the problem of quality improvement is concerned, it is being worked out very satisfactorily. We should all be well pleased with the results obtained so far in this program. It is in effect in over 30 counties in this state. If we ever need quality and advertising, we need it now. Both the farmers and the managers of the creameries are enthusiastic about it and they will all do their part. Quality improvement is something we all need. With the oleomargarine people cashing in on the advertising and support of the Consumers Council of the United States Department of Agriculture and willing and able to spend millions of dollars to advertise their
product, it is up to us to produce and advertise the best possible product we can put on the market. That cannot be done without lots of work on quality improvements and sanitation. Oleo people use unsanitary conditions as an advertising aid and it is up to us not to give them the chance to say it is true.

We should thank the Department of Agriculture & Markets for the way in which they have handled the matter and the spirit of cooperation they have shown, and I know the plant operators and the farmers of Wisconsin will continue to work with them to better the quality and produce the best product possible.

An interesting program has been planned for tomorrow and everybody should attend if possible. Do as Mr. Corbett said: "Go home feeling you have learned something." Appointed to the Resolution Committee were: Mr. E. H. Slater, Mr. Reuben Eirschele, and Mr. Fred Stelloh. Mr. Carlson asked, "How many tubs of butter were to be judged? The answer was thirty. It was stated that butter makers are getting away from exhibiting their butter. The question arose that the prize money should be increased. It was decided to leave this question up to the Resolution Committee.

The Resolution Committee was asked to meet with Mr. Slater right after this session. Meeting adjourned.

The second session of the convention was held Wednesday morning at 9:45. It was called to order by President Dickey, and he introduced the first speaker of the morning,—Professor H. C. Jackson, Department of Dairy and Husbandry, University of Wisconsin, who talked on "The College and the Emergency."