I am afraid of is through political wire-pulling in the capitol our chances for the repeal of that law will be mighty slim unless we do have the backing of every cheese maker and every creamery man in the state. The same thing with the repeal of the whey butter bill.

The Association ought to pass a resolution of thanks for the time and expenses Mr. Kielsmeyer and Mr. Linzmeyer are spending. They are dong things that were for the benefit of everybody and the industry ought to be glad there are some such men. Mr. Damrow is another one. We realize there are always some fellows who will not come into an association who are receiving all the benefits that an association can give them, but try to smoke them out, fellows, and try to get them in the Association. Come tomorrow night.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE WISCONSIN CHEESE TRADE IN SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN

By MR. JOHN KIRKPATRICK, Richland Center.

Gentlemen, not being a public speaker you will have to bear with me in reading this paper. I don't like to appear in public, but my only apology is the insistency of my old friend, Prof. Sammis, who forced me onto this job, one which I don't like at all.

I went into the cheese business in Chicago as a traveling salesman in 1881 and got some experience in buying skim milk cheese in the Elgin district. I bought in the summer months, and traveled principally in the southern states in the fall and winter, selling, and thereby getting a good knowledge of the business.

In June, 1885, I got my first experience in southwestern Wisconsin by being sent to inspect a carload of Cheddars on the shelves of a factory near Richland Center. Arriving at the factory on a beautiful Sunday morning in June, I found the salesman and cheese maker waiting and on being taken into the curing room I found about three hundred of the worst looking cheese I think I had ever seen before or since. Most of them were swelled and bursted—many of them dished so much that the surfaces were like soup plates and all of them more or less covered with mites and skippers and the flavor very bad and unclean. The maker, who had been a school-teacher and a very intelligent man, was green at the business. He was nearly heart broken when I said that I could not accept them at the price previously agreed upon, namely $6\frac{1}{2}$ c., and as I also was a greenhorn and did not know the value of such cheese I was at a loss to know what to say or do. So I telegraphed the dealer I represented, who was a great Methodist, that I had rejected the cheese and asked for instructions. I knew he would be at church and as I wanted quick action I addressed the telegram to him in care of the church he attended. I got a prompt reply as follows: "Did not send you to reject—sent you to accept—ship the cheese." The maker's and salesman's faces were wreathed in smiles and "happiness once more
reigned supreme.” The cheese were shipped and paid for in full but what became of them I have forgotten.

Now the question was “What could be done to improve the make of this factory?” About this time the first cheese instructors had been appointed by the State and were at work and it occurred to me that if I could get in touch with one of them, he would straighten out this maker in a hurry, for he was as I have already stated, a very intelligent man and anxious to succeed in his new undertaking. So I wired one of the instructors whom I knew to be an expert maker, named Phillips, whose headquarters were at Fond du Lac, to come at once. He stayed at the factory for several days and showed this maker how to make good export cheese and ever since that time until today this factory has turned out as fine goods as is made in Wisconsin. Mr. Phillips revolutionized the make of cheese all over Richland County and I venture to say he had more to do in raising the standard to what it is today than any other man I know of.

Along this line it reminds me of a story. There was a large factory in a small town and something went wrong with the machinery and the local mechanics couldn’t find out what the trouble was, and there were several hundred or thousand employes out of work because the machinery wouldn’t work. So the owner of the factory telegraphed to a large city for an expert to come. He came the following morning with a little hand bag, the kind that has all the tools in it, and a pair of overalls. He went into the office, got his overalls on and was introduced to the chief engineer who took him over to the factory, and he fooled around the machinery for a while, opening up a pet cock here and tying a little wire around there, then he told the engineer to turn on the steam, which he did and the wheels went round and everybody was happy. He was called into the office and asked what his bill was. He said fifty dollars and fifty cents. Well satisfied, the owner of the factory said to him, “That is quite reasonable, but I am very curious to know what that fifty cents was for.” “Oh,” he said, “that is for doing the job and the fifty dollars is for knowing how,” and I think that applies to the cheese business just as much as it did to this cotton mill or whatever it was. It takes experts to do things these days.

In the old days of say thirty years ago before there were any Boards of Trade in southwestern Wisconsin, cheese were bought and inspected on factory shelves strictly on a quality basis—and were cured for ten to fourteen days before shipment. Factories had curing room enough to hold them for a month and they frequently had to do so, as buyers only visited the factories when they wanted cheese. There was lots of fun in those days when two or three buyers competed with each other and all kinds of tricks were played and schemes concocted to fool one another. Sometimes an arrangement was made whereby two or three buyers would divide the territory to be covered, but not often. It was usual for buyers to have purchase and sale tickets to be signed by the salesman and buyer and a dollar was paid to bind the bargain.
One of the things to be guarded against in those days was skippered cheese, and while the cheese were greased every day with what was called Fly Proof Cheese Grease, and turned on the shelves every morning it was not a sure preventative as factory windows and doors were not screened as they are today.

Cheese makers of today have little conception of the labor and time a maker put on his cheese in the old days. They did not get their cheese to press at anywhere from noon to two o'clock as some of them are doing now. I made a drive last July in a certain part of the state and found several factories closed at 1:00 P. M., and the so-called cheese in the press and only one day's cheese on the shelves. No wonder people complain that cheese now-a-days disagrees with them. If cheese were better cured on the shelves before paraffining I firmly believe the consumption would be doubled in a comparatively short time.

In the old days, curing rooms were warmly built and stoves kept them at a curing temperature. Today some makers do not think of using stoves except to keep the cheese from freezing on the shelves, if they have shelves enough—if not—in the boxes. I think the Division of Markets have been very easy on you in compelling you to hold your cheese on the shelves for three days as it takes about that time to dry them thoroughly so as to enable them to start curing. I am in hopes that this Division, when they learn something of the cheese business, will lengthen the time of curing and thereby stimulate the consumption of real cheese instead of curd. Especially is this necessary during the late fall, winter and early spring months. As it is today eastern markets such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, etc., absolutely refuse to buy our late fall and winter cheese at any price. This I think is one of the prime causes for the drop in the price just now.

When the Boards of Trade were formed at Muscoda and Lone Rock, buyers from Chicago had to travel all night to get to these places, arriving at four or five o'clock in the morning. Salesmen began to come in from ten to twelve o'clock. The number and style of cheese were put on a blackboard as at Plymouth, but there was no bidding. These boards were what was called button hole boards. Buyers circulated among the salesmen and tried to learn what prices were being offered and it was frequently five P. M. before the market was made. On a close trade a straw hat, a corn cob pipe or a dollar on the side frequently closed the deal. The cheese were subject to inspection and weight at Chicago if the buyer was well and favorably known, but when a new buyer butted in he had to inspect the cheese in the factory and in some cases pay spot cash for them before delivery, but that was not very often. Payment was made by check from Chicago any time inside of a month. When the cheese were rejected on the shelves or in Chicago they were sold on commission. A great many produce houses received cheese on consignment and these were bought by the dealers. Little or none of this kind of business is done today. At one time there were twelve or fifteen
regular cheese houses in Chicago but most of them moved to Wisconsin many years ago or went out of the business. When the cheese arrived in Chicago every box was closely inspected, principally in the summer for skippers, and one of the regular tools of the inspector was a bottle of alcohol and red pepper. A few drops were poured into the skipper hole and immediately the skippers wriggled out of their holes and were brushed off. High acid and sour cheese brought half price or less. These were the days when seven to seven and one-half cents was a good price for summer makes and nine to eleven cents for Octobers. In 1892 six to six and a half was the June price.

The Muscoda and Lone Rock Boards usually closed about December 1st in those days, and any cheese made after that were well cured and shipped on commission. There was then a good export trade and southwestern Wisconsin cheese were well liked on account of their good keeping qualities, as most of the makers came from Scotland, Canada and New York State, where they had learned to make real Cheddar cheese. These men worked early and late, their whole object being to turn out fine quality. They took pride in their work and readily acknowledged the fact when they had an off day’s make and in consequence were very leniently dealt with if at all possible. Those were good old days and much more interesting than they are today. I mean from the standpoint of a buyer. There was plenty of excitement. Now we take in cheese and pay the price somebody else makes and try to look pleasant, which is very difficult just at this time.

There is little or no demand today for off grades, caused very largely by prohibition, for there are no bars rooms to take them and few Welsh rarebits made in hotels, as there is no beer to go along with them. My advice to you, old and young cheese makers is to accept nothing but good sweet clean milk. Put in plenty of time in making the cheese. Dress them well. Avoid cracked rinds. Turn them on the shelves daily and take pride in your work, for what is worth doing at all is worth doing well.

I think a great mistake was made when the Dairy Commissioner changed the duties of the instructors to that of inspectors and was not for the best interests of the cheese business. As I understand it, these inspectors are not to instruct but merely to inspect and see that factories and surroundings are sanitary. I believe this Association should go on record and appeal to the Legislature to appoint enough instructors of experience and turn them loose in the State, to come at the call of any maker who is in trouble and stay long enough to straighten him out. This instructor should also be this inspector. A small charge for his services as an instructor might be made but not as an inspector. I think this has been done in Canada for twenty or thirty years and has resulted in making the Canadian product as fine as anywhere.

We are living in topsy turvy times. The war has unsettled the orderly methods of business and has produced a crop of reformers and politicians, who are trying to remedy all the ills that flesh is
heir to, including your business and mine. You and I have little to say as to how we shall conduct ourselves in trading together and even University professors are taking a hand in regulating us and even going so far as to assure us that it is entirely possible to judge what the quality of cheese three or four days old will be when they are three or six months old. Probably they know more about it than you and me, but only time will tell. We are going bye and bye to discuss matters of vital importance and I hope the outcome of this discussion will be for the benefit of all of us and the large cheese markets of the country will adopt the new methods of buying and selling cheese that we are trying to force on them and on which at the present time they are thinking of with a great deal of interest and anxiety. (Applause.)

DISCUSSION.

Mr. Bruhn: I have enjoyed this talk very much. I have known Mr. Kirkpatrick for many years. As I understand it he has been in the cheese game for forty years. I believe this is a good time to confer the honor of honorary life membership on Mr. Kirkpatrick. I make that as a motion.

The motion was duly seconded and unanimously carried.

Mr. Kirkpatrick: I certainly appreciate this honor, gentlemen, and all my thought is that we do things after thorough consideration and without jumping at conclusions, and before any laws are passed changing the present methods of business let the cheese maker and the cheese dealer and the factory man be consulted by those who have the power. So far as I am aware at present, cheese dealers have never been consulted until after certain rules have been passed. I don't think it is for the good of the business. It is not just for the cheese dealer or cheese maker, and I would like this Association to go on record before any more regulations are passed that those who have had experience of ten, twenty, thirty and forty years should have a little say or be asked to give a little advice before these regulations are passed.

Mr. Ubbelehole: We have just added another life member to our list. I have in mind another man I think should be accepted as a life member. He has been a member of this Association for a good many years and also a cheese dealer. He has been one of the best workers we had in the early days for this Association. He isn't able to be with us today, but he sent a representative. I refer to Mr. Jacob Karlen, Jr., of Monroe. I make a motion we accept him as a life member of this Association.

The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.

Mr. Kalk: I would like to know what Mr. Kirkpatrick thinks, whether the cheese should be cured on the shelf or cured in the vat. I would like to know if he ever made cheese where it was cured on the shelf or in the vat.
Mr. Kirkpatrick: I don't pretend to be a cheese maker. I did make a few skim cheese near Elgin. I believe the cheese should be cured in the vat as well as on the shelves.

Mr. Chairman: The questions that Mr. Kirkpatrick was talking about, some of them seemed to me very vital. There are always two sides to every question and there are lots of by-ways and we should work harmoniously on these subjects, thrash out the whole thing before allowing anyone to jump to any conclusions.

There are two brother cheese makers here this morning who have asked permission to speak concerning market conditions, and we will now hear from Mr. H. A. Rindt.

MORE CHEESE BOARDS

By H. C. RINDT, Clintonville.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I was approached by a few of the members with the question about the Plymouth Board, the ruling board where all the cheese is bought through the state, where the price was set that governed all cheese throughout the state of Wisconsin. They couldn't see why there should not be more boards say, for instance, ten at different points through the state where cheese could be gathered. This is quite a problem. Past experience has taught us many different things on this particular line.

We have had the Appleton Board, the Seymour Board and many other boards where it was difficult to get the makers to offer cheese and the results were the board was abolished in a year, or a few months.

I think these boards wouldn't be successful unless they were compulsory, so that in these districts where they would be established a certain number of factories would have to sell their cheese on these boards. There is no question in my mind but that there is no need for more boards unless it is compulsory. It has been tried out before and it seems impossible to get the factories to stick to a board or to induce them to deliver that cheese on the board and have it sold on open markets. It has got to be made compulsory. If our members feel that way, it would be the best, in my mind, that we appoint a committee of five members to see what could be done and what ought to be done, and introduce this into the legislature. That would be my only solution to the problem. These open boards would sure have to be patronized, there is no question, but from what I have learned the past few hours it seems as though the most of the makers are not interested in it. They seem to be willing and in favor of more boards through the state, but when it comes to the question of offering their cheese on the board they will not give you a satisfactory answer. They don't know whether they should or whether they ought to, but they would like to see the cheese offered on more boards and distributed through the state.

When these little boards were established a few years ago there was not a man, except a very few, who sold cheese at the factory on