CHEESE FACTORY CONDITIONS IN IDAHO

By Mr. C. A. Voigt

Mr. President: Most of you know that I have been working in Idaho the last couple of years and running a string of cheese factories, of which I happen to be the goat that has the manufacturing end to look after. Therefore, I think it is timely for me on this occasion to tell you people that sooner or later, or probably now, you should make your application for a job out there. I don't want any of you to get the impression that because you haven't been able to make the goods in Wisconsin you are going to leave this state and go out West to get away with something that you couldn't get away with in Wisconsin. Any one that comes out West and intends to work for the firm that I represent has got to be a competent maker. He has got to guarantee his work and further than that, when you go out to Idaho, you are going out there with the intention of pioneering in the cheese business. You not only have milk to contend with that isn't just exactly the way you are getting it here, but you can not get in contact with the farmers. All the milk in Idaho is coming in by routes from five to ten and twelve miles, so you are not getting your milk as early in the morning as you are used to getting it here in Wisconsin. Consequently you are facing an over-ripe milk almost every day. For the older cheese makers, it is an easy matter to get away with a little over-ripe milk, but I listened to all the speakers here say, "Send home the milk that you don't like." Out west, we reject milk, but if we rejected all the milk that comes into the factory that is over-ripe, we wouldn't have enough to wash our hands in. (Laughter) I want you to bear that in mind. Consequently it takes a better man to make cheese out there than it does here because we like cheese just as much, if not more. We have to make the quality good so as to pass inspection. We have a grader that you can't slip anything over. We have had applications and get them daily—stacks of letters from young and old cheese makers asking for jobs. We haven't got that many jobs of course, but I tell you that in the last five months or six months we fired six men, and some of these weren't all young cheese makers either. That is just to show you that we are particular in the quality that we turn out. The biggest trouble that we have out there is to get the quality cheese maker, that will keep the factories clean, and I honestly wondered a good many times where in the world is Wisconsin. I am a Wisconsin man. It is only two years I have been out of it. I was wondering if our Wisconsin cheese makers were all going down in grade or whether they weren't able to have any young men any more. The men, some of them that I had, I had to let go, they came out and told me, "I never knew my factory was dirty." I went there continuously after them. I called on them, and I told them why don't you clean up. How in the world can you talk to a farmer and have him clean up his pans and his cows and furnish clean good milk when you look like a bunch of mutts yourselves and

the factory looks the same. I think that even in dairy schools the professors there should be particular when they take on these students. When they see that in their judgment that student hasn't got the experience he should have to go out and take care of a factory as he should. He should be sent home with a letter to tell him to go and hire out to a different man than he has been working for—that teaches him to clean up the factory first. I have traveled in Wisconsin quite a bit and I have seen a good many cheese factories in the state, and I know some Wisconsin factories that need cleaning up, but I suppose that condition will always exist. If any of you boys apply for a job out West, and you know that you can't clean your factory or wash utensils clean, or if you don't know enough about testing, be sure to have money in your pockets that you can go back home, because you are not going to hold the job. (Laughter)

Our eighteen factories are distributed over about three hundred miles. Every factory has its community, possibly from six to ten miles wide or more than that. When we hire a man, we put him into a factory and introduce him to the truck driver. That is as much as we can do to start him out. Then we turn that territory over to him. It takes a man, that knows how to make cheese, but he must be also a diplomat. He must be able to go out and see his patrons and he must choose his words in his conversation with the farmers in such a way that he will win these farmers over from the present way of selling his milk to the cheese factory, which means quite a bit. As I put it before some of the farmers at the meetings we hold out there, it is a hundred times easier to wean a bunch of calves from skimmed milk than to win a bunch of farmers from it. That initiative a cheese maker must have because it is too much for one field man and instructor to go out and see all the people. So that is, in brief, the kind of a cheese maker that we want. I thank you. (Applause)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

MR. PRESIDENT: The next thing in order is the special order of business, the election of officers.

MR. DAMROW: Mr. Chairman, the time is limited. I move that we suspend the rules and ask the secretary to cast a unanimous ballot to re-elect all the officers of the past year.

SECRETARY: Mr. Chairman, that includes the Directors, I suppose.

MR. DAMROW: Absolutely.

Motion seconded and carried.