

WISCONSIN SWISS CHEESE INDUSTRY.

Fred Marty, Browntown.

When your worthy Secretary informed me that my name had been placed on the program, with, Wisconsin Swiss Cheese Industry, as the subject, I wondered why such an important subject had been assigned to me. I dare say that this subject, or the actual meaning of it, has become an important factor in our dairy industry of this state.

For long years, this branch of cheese has been blooming. Our cheese found market everywhere; no distance is too far for transportation. The land on which our cheese is made, is rolling, small valleys, bluffs, hills, timber, good water, fitted in every way, and only, for dairying.

There was a time, not so many years ago, when our district was considered worthless; in the years when the wheat began to fail,—not only due to the so-called chinch bug, but our land failed,—it began to suffer for nourishment. Crops after crops were taken off, nothing brought back on the land to uphold the fields. Rolling as the land is, the continued plowing up, the soil was washed down, and I dare say, had not the immigrants brought with them that noble art of cheesemaking, we could, to-day, compare our noble field with a rocky, mountain creek bed.

But, my dear friends, let us go and take a look over our district. To-day what do we find? Instead of the former, large convenient houses, large barns,—you would wonder where the feed was taken from to support the number of cattle each farmer has. Go and look on the hills, to-day, and take a view of the crops when standing. Go and ask a farmer, to-day, how much he wants for an acre, and I am sure you will only ask him once.

The method of manufacturing Swiss cheese was brought across from Switzerland by the immigrants, in 1845. Little of the Swiss cheese was made at first; only enough for their

own use. Finally some Swiss cheese was made, fair in size, and brought to market by the farmer himself; and so it has kept on increasing, from year to year, that, up to date in Wisconsin, we manufacture 20,000,000 pounds or \$2,000,000 worth of foreign cheese.

But yet little attention was paid by the state to our branch of cheese manufacturing, until four years ago, when the Southern Wisconsin Cheese Makers' Association was organized. The help of the state, has helped the Swiss cheese industry wonderfully, in many ways, and many new improvements which we have to-day were brought about by the generous efforts made by our worthy President of the Southern Wisconsin Cheese Makers' Association. We have, to-day, the opportunity to receive theoretical lectures, given by the different professors at the Dairy School, in which our cheese makers are far behind, with the exception of a few who have attended the Dairy School in Switzerland; we also get practical instruction in three different kinds of foreign cheese. We also have to-day a traveling cheese instructor, whose duty you all are aware of, and I think by the aid of an instructor, a more uniform quality of cheese can be obtained; a more uniform system in manufacturing will only do this; in which our cheese makers differ so much in their ideas, and we know of factories, who used to be troubled for a half a season in making cheese; this all can be stopped, as shown last summer at different places, in a few days' work; and in the last but most important of all, is the authority which is given to the instructor by the Dairy and Food Commissioner, to uphold the sanitary condition of the cheese factories.

The Association also took action on freight rates, on more just rates on the dairy products of that section of the state. All the Association asks, is a sufficient reduction on freight rates to be equal to the rates now in action or force in the neighboring states, from points similar distant to the Chicago market, which would enable the shippers on this side of the state to compete with the shippers on the other side. A reduction from 33 cents to 28 cents a hundred, has already

been enabled by this Association. This rate was granted to Monroe and points west, but Albany, Monticello and New Glarus were left out, and are yet required to pay the 33 cent rate.

The aim of the Association is to improve the cheese industry in all respects, and is making generous efforts to improve the conditions of our poorly constructed cheese factories, of which there is no reason why we can't afford to invest more money. Since our whole prosperity is due to the dairying, and is here to stay, no reason why it shouldn't, since we import, yearly, 75,000 to 80,000 cwt. of Swiss cheese, which we can just as well manufacture here, under better, modern constructed, factories. Let us compare the state of Wisconsin with Switzerland, which is scarcely half as large in size as Wisconsin,—where 36 per cent of the whole milk is made into sixteen different kinds of cheese, which is valued to \$48,000,000 a year, saying nothing of the other 64 per cent, of which some of the milk is consumed in condense factories, raising of high breeds of cattle and consumed direct into the cities; the whole milk is taken from 739,562 cows. We import, however, a fine grade of Swiss cheese from Switzerland, which is made by a skillful operator. But let us remember that a cheese factory in Switzerland is always one of the finest buildings in town; when you want to find the cheese factory, keep your eye on the best looking building and you have found the factory. If we were to price some of the factories, which have been erected in late years, we would find that the price would be all the way from \$10,000 to \$15,000. If this has been conceded, let me take you into our district and look up some of our Wisconsin cheese factories. Now, first I want to say that we are compelled to change the rule that we use in Switzerland to find a cheese factory; if we wouldn't we would never find a cheese factory. We are now going right to the heart of our cheese industry; here we come to a large convenient house, little further we come to a large barn, say 100 x 30 feet, our stranger begins to open his eyes, he'll begin to compare the buildings with the surrounding land, then, wondering what has built all of this;

meantime, we notice a man, working desperately in separating a few boards from an old fence, we go over to him and, as expected, find him to be the proprietor, we then fall into a lively conversation; the farmer explaining particularly of how much they can make on their cows upon averaging over a dollar per hundred for their milk, we then ask him what was made out of the milk, he quickly mentioned cheese, so we ask him to show us the factory. He said, just where I was going, I am gathering a few boards to repair the factory floor as I think it needs some fixing. It is therefore as a rule the poorest building we find to be the cheese-factory. However, we now have some exceptions, but as a rule the new building or factories which are built, are yet in too close a touch with the old style. However with aid of our Association we trust to overcome this in the future. I take it as my duty to urge every young man who intends to become a cheese maker to attend the State Dairy school, since there is no branch of manufacturing where theory and practical knowledge are so much dependent on one another as in dairying, cheese and butter making, therefore, I again say, young men especially, accept the opportunities offered to you by the State Dairy school, appear in larger number—40 and 50 strong and better arrangement will be made in our divisions at the Dairy school, which not only will be a benefit to you, but to the whole Swiss cheese industry of Wisconsin.

DISCUSSION.

A Member: Can you make just as good Swiss cheese in this country as you can in Switzerland, and if not, why?

Mr. Marty: We are manufacturing a fine grade of cheese here, and I think the only reason why we can't do quite as well is the poorly constructed buildings. We have sections where we can obtain an elegant, an ideal Swiss cheese, in Green county, and there is no reason why we could not manufacture a Swiss cheese fitted for the world's market.