

# Oleomargarine and Agriculture

Economic effects of the famous butter substitute discussed by an Investigating Engineer of the Canadian Pacific Railway

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At the present moment controversy is high as to whether or not the Canadian industry of oleomargarine manufacture, legalized and established as a war measure, should be permitted to continue as a permanent field of Canadian enterprise and production. It is, therefore, opportune to review, from an unbiased standpoint, some of the facts in regard to this important question.

From such a standpoint, there is one aspect of this question which appears to be uncontroversial. Do Canadians want oleomargarine for consumption in their homes; is the product nourishing and harmless; is there room for a Canadian oleomargarine industry, utilizing Canadian raw materials and employing Canadian skilled and unskilled labour; can such an industry be developed to increase the export trade of the country and eliminate importation of the product from foreign countries? If the answer to these questions is "yes"; if all these things can be done with advantage to, or even without detriment to the agricultural and dairying interests, then it were folly to cripple such an industry at the outset by tentative and hampering legislation, with permission to manufacture from year to year with no definite assurance to invested capital as to the continuation of such permission from one year to the next. In such a policy there is nothing clean-cut, business-like or Canadian. Either the industry is a desirable one or it is not. It is a straight issue that can surely be decided on its merits.

## Manufactured First in 1871.

Oleomargarine is not, as most people think, a child of recent birth, conceived in the stress of modern conditions, an undesirable infant nurtured by over population and the high cost of living. As far back as 1871, oleomargarine came to the rescue of the French nation during the terrible scarcity of food fats which led to the capitulation of Paris and which was undermining the health and fighting strength of the French people. It was invented in Paris as the result of a prize offered by Napoleon III. A French chemist, Hippolyte Mege, discovered that skimmed milk if churned with animal fat would absorb the fat and produce butter. He presented to the Emperor a batch of oleomargarine made in this way and won the prize.

Turning now to the history of Canadian margarine, we find that, before the war, Canada was the only country in the world in which its manufacture was prohibited by law. The abnormal and vital demand for food fats created by the war broke down these artificial barriers, and the act prohibiting its importation and sale was repealed in November, 1917. This war measure was due to expire at the end of 1919, but was extended to August, 1920, and for manufacture and sale to March, 1921. A further extension is now under debate.

In the first year (1918) in which the sale of oleomargarine was allowed, some 12 million lbs. were consumed, of which 9 millions were manufactured in Canada and three millions imported from the United States. In the second year, the consumption increased to some 16 million lbs., of which 10 to 11 millions were made in Canada.

## Experience of the United States.

Turning for a moment to the experience of the United States, we find that, prior to 1914, the annual per caput consumption of oleomargarine was about 1½ lbs., and that, in the past three years, this has increased to from 3½ to 4 lbs. In Canada to-day, the per caput consumption equals 1½ lbs. Now, looking at these figures of increased annual production and comparing to-day's individual consumption with that of the United States, many will infer that there must be a demand for this product in Canada and that the per head consumption line will (if permitted) parallel that of our Southern neighbors. But the farmer says—"If you allow the manufacture of this oleomargarine, what will become of our butter market?" Let us examine the facts.

In England, oleomargarine is consumed by all classes, including the farmer, the per caput consumption being 8½ lbs., and even so, the butter consumption in England is as high as in the United States. The United States claim that their butter consumption has increased alongside of their margarine industry.

## Its Chemical Components.

The manufacturer will tell the farmer that his product contains two principal ingredients for the supply of both of which he is dependent on the farmer: oleo oil and butter. He will explain that oleo oil is pressed out of beef fats and that before margarine manufacture was permitted, this oil was a drug on the market. Consequently the packers, with a demand for oleo oil from the margarine industry, will pay a better price for the farmer's live stock than when the oil is a waste material. It has been said that Canadians do not want to eat margarine. Is not the answer found in the increased consumption already quoted? The average Canadian housewife is not prepared to use in her cooking, butter costing 70 cents to 80 cents a pound, but she is glad to purchase oleomargarine for that purpose and others at from 40 to 45 cents a pound.

## The Protection of the Public.

What about the protection of the public from

the fraudulent sale of oleomargarine as butter? Let us see what precautions are considered sufficient in other countries, then, if necessary, a wise combination of these might be found to suit our own conditions. In France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Russia, oleomargarine and butter may not be sold in the same store. In Britain, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, they may not be manufactured on the same premises.

Protection by color test is sought in Canada, France, Germany and Portugal by prohibiting the addition of coloring matter. Denmark has a system of control whereby no higher color than a certain shade is allowed in oleomargarine on a comparison made by color standard cards. To assist in distinguishing margarine chemically, Belgium, Portugal and Sweden insist that it must contain a certain quantity of Sesame oil. The United States controls the manufacture of margarine by a system of taxes, licenses and Government stamp-wrapings. In a happy combination of these regulations, it should surely be possible to find security for the purchaser, and representative manufacturers would welcome such effective legislation.

## Canada's Butter in Demand.

Canada's butter is in demand throughout the world. Every pound saved from domestic consumption is a pound available for export at a better return for the farmer. Denmark has built up one of the most thriving export dairy trades of the world by encouraging the home consumption of oleomargarine.

But is this margarine a healthy and nutritious food? Well, that is a question for the scientist. He will talk of "growth accessories" of "oil soluble A," "water soluble B" and "vitamine." These are the vital ingredients of human food once thought to be found only in milk, butter and eggs. They are now proved to exist also in animal fats, including oleo oil—one of the chief constituents of margarine. Millions of men in the army never tasted butter for years, and, disastrous as the war was in most respects, it cannot be said to have injured the physique of those who came through unscathed by shell, bullet or gas.

Nobody claims that margarine is as palatable as butter, but at relative prices, it will, if available, be bought and used by millions who would otherwise go without necessary fat food rather than increase the family budget by buying an equal quantity of butter. Supply this demand for a cheap and nutritious fat food and the farmer will still find a ready market for every pound of butter he can produce.

# April Pulp and Paper Exports

Pulp and paper exports from Canada for April, the first month of Canada's fiscal year, reached a total value of \$8,172,356, as compared with \$4,968,939 for April, 1919, an increase of \$3,203,417. They were made up as follows:

Month of April	1919	1920	Gain
	\$	\$	\$
Paper and Mfgs. of	3,630,238	4,729,354	1,099,116
Chemical pulp . .	1,120,990	2,936,633	1,815,643
Mechanical pulp . .	217,711	506,369	288,658
	\$4,968,939	\$8,172,356	\$3,203,417

The greatest gain was in unbleached sulphite, of which 397,359 cwts., valued at \$1,587,236 were exported in April this year as compared with 87,786 cwts., valued at \$352,485, last year. Of bleached sulphite, 131,161 cwts., valued at \$728,669 were exported this year, as compared with 80,259 cwts., valued at \$363,732 last. Exports of sulphate (kraft) pulp for the month amounted to

163,533 cwts., valued at \$620,728 this year, compared with 131,544 cwts., valued at \$404,773 last. Exports of mechanically ground pulp for the month were 198,664 cwts., valued at \$506,369, this year, and 161,449, valued at \$217,711 last.

Newsprint formed the principal item of the paper exports for the month. There was, however, a falling off in quantity although an increase in value, there being 899,342 cwts., valued at \$3,827,541, exported this year, compared with 920,592 cwts., valued at \$3,160,318 last.

Exports of pulpwood for the month amounted to 40,433 cords valued at \$420,741, a decrease from 68,680 cords, valued at \$629,189, a year ago.

The distribution of the month's exports was as follows:

Total paper . . .	344,517	3,730,682	654,155
Total pulp . . .	514,568	2,506,825	421,509
Pulpwood . . .	.....	420,741	421,509
Totals . . .	\$859,085	\$6,658,248	\$1,075,664