

### The Advantages of Skim Stations.

E. S. Snively, Lincoln, Neb.

The latter end of the nineteenth century marks an epoch of unparalleled advancement in all the branches of the mechanical arts and sciences. The closing years of the century show the most remarkable changes in this wonderful advancement of our industrial life. Every new feature of this industrial revolution has produced remarkable changes. The new inventions and discoveries, the new methods of taking advantage of the business facilities afforded by this extraordinary development proceeds with such marvelous rapidity that it is difficult for some of us to accommodate ourselves to the new conditions; taking advantage of what must naturally bring success; more difficult possibly for us to be willing to abandon and discard old ways and means, old business traditions; most difficult for us to keep abreast with new influences, thus escaping disaster.

What is true generally speaking of this material advancement throughout every branch of our industrial life, is particularly true of the progress and advancement in the creamery business, the manufacture of butter. The advent of the skimming station or its substitution as a feeder, a part of one great central plant, instead of having so many small individual and separate factories, has marked one of the principle epochs in the material advancement of the manufacture of butter in this country. It substitutes new features and methods, new business principles that are recognized and acknowledged as being pre-eminently necessary for the building up and maintaining, and for the advancement and success of business generally.

We naturally look first to the benefits which ordinarily come to any business by changing. We find among these advantages the first to be that of centralization, of being able to conduct a business that has its ramifications scattered over a wide range of territory, at one central plant; under one management, with the best of skilled labor, making each station an integral part of a common whole.

It is obviously unnecessary for us to enter into a discussion as to the plans of centralization as applied to our business. We learn, however, that the same process of evolution that took the manufacture of most of the produce demanded by commerce from the hands of the individual producer, placing it in the hands of the smaller manufacturer, is now, and has been, undergoing a second change—that of changing from a small or local manufacturer to a central business; turning out at one plant in one place a product, not merely for one community but for many. The reason for this change, as we mentioned before, are not artificial but natural. We have on one hand the consumer of all products, demanding that the articles shall be sold to him at the lowest price; that they shall be manufactured in such style and of such quantity and quality as he may demand, and that the supply of these products shall be uniform and reliable. On the other hand we have the man who produces the raw material, demanding that he receive for his material and labor the very highest possible price.

The small or local manufacturer is in no condition to meet either of these demands, and his product is entirely regulated by the supply, which like the supply is local, and is affected by every flurry in local weather conditions, by local crops, liable to sudden and dangerous changes, causing him to add additional cost to his product, to cover the uncertainty of supply. Thus we can readily see how, by spreading past local conditions and local supply, an enterprise is enabled to place its product within the reach of the best possible buyer at the best possible advantage, and at the same time pay the best possible prices.

As general conditions maintain a

fairly equal balance, the demand of one year will not differ materially from that of another, the short crops, the unfavorable weather conditions and limited supply of the section being offset by an opposite condition in another section. Our first deduction from the plan of centralization must necessarily be that of a certain evenness and sureness in the supply. Again, the economical advantages of this plan of centralization in the manufacture of butter are great beyond comparison. We have, first, the saving of the original cost of buildings, machinery, power appliances, etc. We would have one building capable of producing five hundred times the amount of a smaller individual one, costing less than twenty-five of thirty small ones would. We have on the one hand the individual or small factory manufacturing at a maximum cost per pound; while on the other, the central plant manufacturing at a minimum cost. The cost of labor, transportation, and necessary supplies, are minimized, all at the very lowest point.

A factory that on an average handles five thousand pounds of milk daily throughout the year must practically have as much labor expended on the product of the five thousand pounds of milk as if it were five thousand pounds of butter. Thus the large central plant is enabled to supply itself with men in each department who devote their entire time to the work, who must necessarily keep posted on every improvement and invention in their department, thus securing, comparatively speaking, perfection in every particular, which of necessity must give a decided advantage to the complete product over the local or small manufacturer, where the individual workman has charge of several departments, knowing a little about all, much about nothing. As this advantage carries in the mechanical part of the business, so does it carry in the clerical department, allowing a certain plant to maintain on its own staff those who are not ordinarily within the reach of the local or small manufacturer.

Again, the freight rate per car load lot being less than local rate, the cost of transportation of the finished product is at the lowest point, as everything is shipped in carload lots. This also brings to the shipper advantages of special arrangements of cars, purposely built for the transportation of dairy products, by means of which he

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