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from mine to consumer

combination of the two being the anchor of our limited lacquer and collodion industry for many years. The source of amyl alcohol is the fermentation of ethyl alcohol in which it is a by-product. Even with our large alcohol and whiskey industries in pre-prohibition days we never made enough in this country to fill the demand and large quantities were imported from Holland and Russia, the latter being a by-product of the fermentation of vodka. In view of the above facts amyl products were so high in price that they forced narrow limitations on lacquers made with them. Amyl alcohol is now made synthetically from petroleum.

"Acetone, $(CH_3)_2O$ (dimethyl ketone) is possibly the next in line as an important solvent. It is absolutely essential in the manufacture of certain kinds of smokeless powder and this fact caused intensive research during the early days of the World War, the result being that a fermentation process was developed from cornstarch which produced a wonderful grade of pure quality acetone at a very much lower cost than could be obtained by the old method, namely, the destructive distillation of acetate of lime.

"It is very evident that the use of acetone is in its infancy and that many of our manufacturers of artificial silk and allied products will use it in increasing quantities as we have more simple sources of supply. It might be mentioned that in the prewar days the by-products were known commercially as acetone oils and chemically as methyl-ethyl ketones and were largely used in the production of lacquers for leather and artificial leather manufacturing in spite of their very offensive and persistent odor.

"Methyl acetone, which is a by-product of the refining of wood alcohol made by the wood distillation process, has been for years an exceedingly unpleasant solvent. It is still valuable in limited quantities but the users depending on it might as well make up their minds to find a substitute as the enormous development of the production of synthetic methanol is going to drive the wood burner almost, if not entirely, out of business.

"Ethyl acetate is the solvent par excellence, developed since the possibility of tax-free ethyl alcohol and the increased and cheaper production of acetic acid. The commercial and economic development of ethyl acetate was very rapid from 1914 on, and this is now the principal solvent used in the production of lacquers on a large scale for the leather and artificial leather industry as well as other lacquer manufacturers. The use of this product would be considerably increased could the price be somewhat modified.

"Methyl acetate, which is made from methyl alcohol and acetic acid, is a very valuable solvent for some lacquers and was extensively used in connection with the aeroplane industry during the world war. However, this solvent is so unstable that it probably will never be as popular as some of the others.

"Butyl alcohol in commercial quantities was the result of nothing short of a miracle when the fermentation process for the manufacture of acetone was developed under war pressure, as this same fermentation gave a yield of butyl alcohol which was at first a puzzle and a handicap in the process.

"It then developed that butyl alcohol was all but a twin sister to amyl alcohol and that it had for a practical lacquer purpose, every desirable quality of amyl alcohol and that the acetate made from it had the same desirable qualities as amyl acetate. In addition to these facts it was found that it could be produced so as to cost the consumer about half the price usually asked for amyl alcohol and amyl acetate.

"There was the basis for the formation of so greatly enlarged lacquer production as to found a new industry. The practical development of many years of dreams on the part of the lacquer chemist has today been realized and we have an enormous industry which is still in its infancy and which has only been possible on account of the development of a source of supply of large quantities of butyl alcohol at a reasonable price. The only thing that will prevent the lacquer industry from doubling or trebling its present size will be its inability to get increasing quantities of butyl alco-

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