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[Jan 5, 1935]

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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RESUMPTION. One of the bits of creative joy during the two hectic sessions of the 73rd Congress was the preparation of the Congressional Front. At all times, the author sought to keep it free from captious criticism and partisan interpretation. Its principle purpose was to elaborate on the processes of the Congress and to present such sidelights and highlights as do not ordinarily come to the attention of the average reader. If this column has proved instructive and interesting to the many readers, we shall have been amply repaid for the effort involved. With the convening of the 74th Congress, the Congressional Front again resumes. To the many editors who have been so kind and gracious in publishing the Front, the author expresses his gratitude and extends best wishes for a Happy New Year.

74th CONGRESS. George Washington was President and John Adams, the Vice President when the 1st Congress convened on March 4, 1789. It convened under a special resolution of the Continental Congress and until 1820, Congress convened at various dates. Since 1820, the mandate of the Constitution was followed and Congress convened on the first Monday in December. However, by the terms of the new Constitutional amendment adopted in 1934 and duly ratified by all the states, the so-called "lame duck" sessions have been abolished under which defeated members of Congress continued to hold office for nearly 13 months, and it now meets on the 3rd day of January. The House of Representatives contains 435 members. This membership is derived from a formula. On the basis of the 1930 Census, the population of each state is divided by the whole number 279,712 and the result is the number of members each state shall have in the lower House plus an additional member if the fractional remainder is greater than one half. Consequently Illinois has 27 members, New York 45, Texas 21, Wyoming 1, Indiana 12 and so on. Since the 1st Congress, there has been 15 apportionments. Some states have gained members, others have lost. Witness Vermont which had 5 members in 1830 but now has but 1 member. In 1818, when Illinois was admitted to statehood, it had but 1 member; 3 members in 1830, 9 in 1850, 20 in 1880, 27 now.

NEW SPEAKER. The new Congress met exactly at 12:00 noon on January 3rd. By custom, the Clerk of the Old House presides, orders a call of the roll, entertains motions for the nomination of officers. Each party holds a caucus before the opening day and selects a slate of nominees consisting of Speaker, Clerk, Doorkeeper, Sergeant-at-Arms, Postmaster, and Chaplain. For the first time in the history of Congress, the Progressive Party, all of whose members are from Wisconsin also had a candidate for Speaker in the person of George J. Schneider of Wisconsin. The Republicans/selected Rep. Bertrand H. Snell of New York and the Democrats Rep. Joseph W. Byrns of Tennessee. Vote on Speaker is almost invariably a strict party vote, and for weeks, it was a foregone conclusion that Rep. Byrns would become the new Speaker. He comes from the same state which gave Presidents Polk and Jackson to the nation. The last Speaker to come from Tennessee was Polk who presided in the capacity during the 24th Congress. In fact, Speaker Byrns, President Polk, and President Jackson all came from the same city of Nashville, in the same county and the same Congressional district. He spent his early life on a farm, became a lawyer after graduating from Vanderbilt University and has been in politics since early manhood having served first in both branches of the Tennessee legislature and subsequently in Congress. With his rise to Speakership, he begins his 20th year in Congress, being ranked only by Hon. A. J. Sabath of Chicago who is beginning his 30th year. He is tall, grizzled, slightly stooped, with deep set eyes and thinning gray hair. His voice is slightly high pitched and strident. In debate, when the issue waxes warm, he becomes eloquent, emphatic and convincing.

COMPOSITION OF CONGRESS. 325 Old Members, 110 New Members. Of this number 322 are Democrats, 103 are Republicans, 3 are Farmer Laborites, 7 are Progressives. There were 102 members of the preceding Congress who either did not run for re-election or who were defeated.

MISSING FACES. Mr. Bakewell of Conn., former professor of philosophy at Yale University and altogether a very able and scholarly man. Mr. DePriest of Chicago, well known and able negro from Chicago who was defeated by Arthur W. Mitchell, negro Democrat lawyer from Chicago, Fred Britten, of Chicago, for 22 years a member, an expert on naval affairs and popularly known about Washington as "The Admiral."; Edgar Howard, grand old man of Nebraska, well above 80 years of age, and who for years was celebrated as the "double" of William Jennings Bryan; James J. Lanzetta of New York City who always claimed credit for making Fiorella LaGuardia the mayor of New York City by defeating him for Congress and thus making him a candidate for the mayoralty; E. W. Marland of Oklahoma, who built up a fifty million dollar oil fortune, endowed libraries and museums, lost it all, was elected to Congress and now resigns to become governor of Oklahoma; Magnus Johnson of Minnesota who served a term in the U. S. Senate, and many others. The lower House is a changing body.

FLAWS Already, the Constitutional amendment, abolishing lame-duck session and convening Congress on January 3 and providing for the inauguration of the President on January 20th discloses flaws. From November elections until January 3rd is such a comparatively short time for old members to vacate and newly elected members to get into their offices, that a proposal to move election day into October or move the convening date of Congress into February is being considered. In 1936, under the present set-up, there will be but 41 days between the November elections and the time that the canvassing of returns must be completed and the assembling of the electors to cast their ballots for President. Under existing State laws, it is insufficient time. Moreover, there is but five days between the meeting date of the electors and the inauguration of the President and as one member suggested, "We may find ourselves without a President." The matter will be considered by the Judiciary Committee of the House.

BILLS Three thousand bills were dropped into the legislative hopper the first day. This is more than three times as many as were passed in both sessions of the 73rd Congress. The number will be increased daily and will reach the usual average of 18 or 20 thousand before the 74th Congress ends. They cover every subject under the sun. Most of them seek appropriations of public money. In point of amount, one seeking to give the Home Owners Loan Corporation an additional 4 billion dollars (1 billion more than they had before) tops the list.

DISCHARGE RULE. Committee Chairman are all powerful. They can refuse to call the committee together. They can refuse to consider bills before the committee and thus stifle legislation for which there may be a public demand. Years ago, to remedy this condition, the rules of procedure were amended to provide that a petition could be filed with the clerk of the House to discharge any Committee from further consideration of a Bill, after such bill had been before the Committee for 30 days. Whenever 145 members signed such petition, the Bill automatically came before the House for consideration and a vote. Thru the use of this Discharge Rule, the Bonus Bill, the Frazier-Lemke Bill, and others were brought out of Committee during the 73rd Congress. On the first day of the present session, the majority party moved to amend the Rules and increase the required number of signatures to 218, or a majority, thus making it more difficult to bring out controversial legislation.

ANNUAL MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT. A call bell rings thru House Office Buildings at 11:45 a.m. January 4th. Suddenly a great exodus of members thru the subways and to the House Chamber in the Capitol. In the Chamber, hubbub, noise, excitement, the drone of voices. Galleries filled with people from near and far. Press galleries filled to capacity. Business suits mingling with formal morning dress on the floor of the House. The First Lady sitting in the west gallery knitting, chatting. The gavel falls and calls the House to order. The Speaker recognizes the Doorkeeper who booms out, "Mr. Speaker, the Senate of the United States." Lead by the Vice President, dignified Senators stroll in and takes front seats. A moment later the Doorkeeper booms out, "Mr. Speaker, the Members of the Cabinet." Lead by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the Cabinet slowly marches down the centre aisle and take specially designated chairs. An expectant hush. Again the Doorkeeper, this time from a door in the hallway, "Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States." Preceded by a committee of Senators and Representatives, captained by the Sergeant at Arms, the President enters. He receives a sustained ovation. Applause subsides. The President lays a manuscript on the reading desk. He adjusts his glasses. He begins to read. The message is punctuated by applause. The last word is read and without delay, he bows slightly and at once leaves the platform. Sustained applause as he leaves. A few moments later, the gavel falls, the House transacts a brief bit of formal business. There is a motion to recess. Members hurry toward the House restaurant for a delayed luncheon. The annual message has been delivered. The Congress is now ready for work.

TID BITS. A baker in San Jose, California, sends a printed pamphlet prophesying that a dictator, whom he calls Antichrist will ascend in this nation and later become Dictator of the World, stating that in the face of this man, God will imprint the number 666. He asserts that recent newsphotos of this man already reveal these sixes growing in his countenance. It required 23½ tons of paper to publish the June 16th (final) 1934 issue of the Congressional Record. From the time of Jefferson until Woodrow Wilson, Presidents sent their messages to Congress by messenger. Wilson revived the custom of appearing in person. Reason for Jefferson's preference in sending the message rather than coming in person was because of ankle-deep mud on Pennsylvania Avenue between White House and Capitol.