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THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen.
16th District.

A BIRTHDAY.

The Congressional Front has a birthday as you read this first issue of the 1940 edition. It is 8 years old. It was born in that eventful 100-day session of the 73rd Congress in 1933. From an infant in swaddling clothes, it is now a lusty youngster of 8. It began very modestly thro the kindness of the publishers in the 16th district of Illinois. It now goes throughout the state and into several other states. With a bit of pride, we submit that material in the Congressional Front has been the basis for editorial from Kansas to New York. On it's 8th birthday, the Congressional Front expresses a sincere wish for a Happy New Year and re-dedicates itself to the effort to present timely, informative and factual material on government that is free from bias, personalities and partisanship.

ROLL OF THE TOLL OF THE REAPER.

At noon on the 3rd, the Speakers gavel fell and the 3rd session of the 76th Congress came to order and awaited the President's message on the State of the Union. The first order of business after the House chaplain's invocation was the roll call. It brought home so poignantly the names and personalities of those who had answered the Last Roll Call. What a toll it is for a single Congress: Senators Lewis of Illinois and Logan of Ky; Representatives Lord of N. Y, Daly of Pa, McMillian of So. Car, Taylor of Tenn, Mapes of Mich, Heinke of Nebr, Martin of Colo, Iglesias of Puerto Rico, Turner of Tenn, Eaton of Cal, Pierce of N. Y, Sirovich of N. Y, Griswold of Wis, Ashbrook of Ohio, Bolton of Ohio, Owen of Ga, Their coming and passing reminds one of the phrase of that Chinese philosopher Lin Yuteng. He refers to the "Stream of Life". Each one was a part of the moving stream of our national life. Each gave of his best and disappeared in the current to find refuge on the Invisible Shore. Hail and farewell!

GRIST.

The first days grist would assay about as follows: 96 petitions were introduced dealing with tariffs, pensions, Dies Committee, taxes and a host of other matters; 24 private bills, 37 public bills, 7 Joint Resolutions and 57 Executive Communications were introduced. It brings to mind, the fact that during the 1st session of this Congress which ran from January to August of 1939, 6000 petitions were presented. Of this number, 1212 were requests for Federal funds. They ranged all the way from a request for funds by the Connecticut River Fish and Game Commission to provide flood control and "better fishing" in the Connecticut River to a request from Fort Wayne Indiana to build a memorial auditorium in honor of General Anthony Wayne. Only 24 petitions were submitted in favor of reduced spending by the Federal Government. It is interesting to note that 38 state legislatures sent 165 petitions to Congress requesting additional funds for a variety of purposes.

CONCENTRATION OF LABOR.

There are 3070 counties in the United States. Seventy five per cent of all wages paid in the year 1937 in manufacturing plants were paid in 153 out of the 3070 counties. 25% of all factory wages paid in

1937 were paid in only 7 counties in the United States. Those 7 are the counties which embrace Detroit, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cleveland and Los Angeles. Wayne County Michigan which embraces Detroit is number 1 on the list; 126 counties in the U. S. do not have a single factory. Illinois counties rank as follows: Cook County 2nd out of the 3070, Madison (Alton) 63rd, Rock Island 67th, Winnebago (Rockford) 73rd, St. Clair (E. St. Louis) 94th, Tazewell (Pekin-East Peoria) 99th, Kane 103rd, Peoria 130th, Lake (Waukegan) 134th, LaSalle 138th, and Will (Joliet) 143rd. That 7 counties should pay 25% of all factory wages is startling testimony to industrial concentration.

THE BATTLE OF TRADE AGREEMENTS.

One certain conflict ahead is that of the extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreement perhaps we can make it clear as to what is involved. Prior to 1934, all imported foreign goods, whether they were agricultural commodities or non-agricultural came into this country under the provisions of a tariff act passed by Congress in 1930 known as the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act. All goods were generally divided into two classes: goods on which a duty was paid and goods on the free list. Thousands of items are admitted absolutely free of duty. All goods and commodities which must pay duty are listed in the Act of 1930 together with the amount of duty to be paid on each item. In June of 1934, Congress passed and the President approved an act known as the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act. It is really an amendment to the Smoot-Hawley Act of 1930. It authorizes the President to enter into trade agreements with other countries and permits him to reduce the duty on imported goods but not to exceed 50% of the duty as provided in the 1930 Act. The Act is administered by the State Department. Its operation is quite simple. Trade representatives of foreign countries are called in to consult with trade experts from the U. S. Foreign countries are asked to reduce duties on goods which we would like to sell to them. Our representatives suggest reductions in duty on goods which they would like to sell to us. When they arrive at an agreement, it is drawn up in the form of a treaty showing in detail the items on which we propose to make concessions and how much and items on which the foreign nation will make concessions and how much. A date is then set for hearings at which time all concerns and individuals who might be affected may come and testify for or against the proposed agreement. It is revised or permitted to stand and then submitted to the President. If he signs it and the other nation approves, it then becomes effective. Under this act, 21 trade agreements have been made. The first one was negotiated with Cuba in 1934. The last one with Venezuela in December 1939. Virtually all agreements can be terminated upon 6 months notice being given by either party to the agreement. In general, the 21 agreements show up as follows: (1) The U. S. has reduced the duty on slightly less than 1000 items, (2) it has agreed not to increase the duty on 100 other items (3) and it has agreed not to place a duty on about 150 other items. In return for this, the 21 other countries have reduced their duties on U. S. goods. Those who favor the program contend that it has (1) increased our exports to other nations (2) helped American labor (3) helped the American farmer (4) helped American industry (5) created extra purchasing power. Those who oppose the agreements contend that they have (1) increased imports at reduced duties (2) caused a loss of revenue (3) handed the American market over to the workers and farmers of foreign countries (4) adversely affected American industries (5) extended benefits to foreign nations without comparable benefits to the United States. This Trade Agreement Act expires on June 30, 1940. Two things can be done. It can be extended in its present form, it can be permitted to expire, or it can be extended with a provision that no trade agreement can be thereafter negotiated unless it is first ratified by the Senate. The President, in his message to Congress has declared himself in favor of the extension of the act in its present form. On one side of this fight will be farm groups, consumers groups, some industries. On the other side will be other farm groups, labor organizations, other industries. It will be fought out in this session of Congress. If the act is allowed to expire, the 21 agreements now in effect will continue unless Congress should by legislative enactment require that notice of termination be given. It will be a spirited battle.