

1-13-40

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

NOTE FOR THE GROWING OIL INDUSTRY OF ILLINOIS.

Venezuela is but a small country in South America but so rich in oil that from the exports of petroleum it has managed to keep a balanced budget, pay off it's public debt and keep it's currency value well above par. The U. S. has always been a good oil customer of Venezuela, taking about 34½ million barrels annually. By virtue of the Reciprocal trade agreement which we negotiated with Venezuela and which became effective November 6, 1939, we shall probably be even better customers. Heretofore, crude petroleum and fuel oil came into this country free of any import duty. (Great Britain has a duty of 3¢ per gallon or about \$1.20 per barrel) The only import charge on this oil was a ½¢ per gallon excise tax which Congress imposed a few years ago. By the terms of the recent trade treaty, Venezuela may export to this country an amount of petroleum and fuel oil which is the equivalent of 5% of the total amount of petroleum processed in our refineries. This will amount to about 58,000,000 barrels per year. It will continue to enter the U. S. free of duty and the import excise tax has been reduced to ¼¢ per gallon or 10¢ per barrel. All of which means that up to 58,000,000 barrels of such oil may enter the U. S. at a tax not to exceed 10¢ per barrel. Most of this oil comes to Atlantic ports and finds it's way into the eastern market and will therefore be competitive with the black gold which flows from the earth in southern Illinois.

QUARTER CENTURY IN THE MINING INDUSTRY.

In 1915, 5500 commercial coal mines in the U. S., employing 557,000 miners produced 442 million tons of coal averaging 794 tons per year per man. Now take a trip on the magic carpet of time and come down to the present, 25 years later. About 6500 commercial mines, employing only 435,000 men produced 344,000,000 tons or an average of 906 tons per miner. Twenty five years ago, coal produced 82% of the energy consumed. Today it produces but 46%. Twenty five years ago, petroleum produced but 16% of the energy consumed. To-day it produces 33%. Petroleum, natural gas and water power have usurped the market once enjoyed by coal. One other factor which accounts for reduced consumption of coal is industrial efficiency. Twenty five years ago, it took 3400 pounds of coal to produce a ton of pig iron. Today it takes but 2800 pounds. All this is stark and dramatic testimony to incessant change in our industrial life.

LITTLE MENTIONED FARM CROPS.

Bear with us as we tell you about one farm crop seldom mentioned in the middle west. Yet everybody eats them. We refer to cranberries. More than 300 years ago, when the Pilgrims hopped off of the Mayflower near Plymouth Rock, they discovered cranberries growing wild in the bogs of Massachusetts. Several hundred years elapsed before anyone thought of improving and cultivating this tart and colorful berry. Just before the Civil War, first efforts were made to improve yields and varieties. While only 30,000 acres in 5 states are devoted to this holiday dessert, the annual crop reaches 670,000 barrels with a farm value of \$5,000,000.

OUR SCATTERED SOLDIERS.

Field exercises in which a large number of troops will participate in the southeastern states will cost \$18,000,000. Last week, the House of Representatives voted funds for this purpose. In the course of the testimony on this expense, General Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army pointed out that the largest item of cost in bringing a mass of troops together for manoeuvres is transportation. This in turn calls attention to the fact that we have more than 250 military posts and garrisons scattered throughout the country. Every state has at least one. New York has 26. Many of these are small and can accommodate only a small number of officers and men. Many of these are the relics of those early days of the Indian Wars. Small forts or military posts were established on the frontier and as the frontier moved westward, these establishments were retained and made permanent. Every one of them must be kept in repair and provided with heating, lighting, sewer, hospital facilities and other accessories and the maintenance expense is tremendous. The 227,000 troops in the expanded Regular Army could be accommodated in less than half of this number of posts at substantial savings and with greater efficiency.

SPY SCARE.

History is not a very effective teacher. Perhaps this flows from the fact that history teaches by painful experience but new generations come along upon whom the experience is lost. Do you recall the spy scares of 1917. To be sure, there were spies as the files will show and there was sabotage as in the case of the Black Tom bombing in New Jersey. But many of the anonymous complaints of spies and subversive activity were based upon a motive of revenge. That was 23 years ago. Today, we witness something of the same phenomenon. Chief G-Man J. Edgar Hoover reports that at the rate complaints are now coming in, they will exceed 75,000 per year. Ten thousand people are offering their services every month to the U. S. to ferret out spy activities and subversive efforts. Congress has provided 1½ millions of dollars in the recent deficiency appropriation bill so that the Federal Bureau of Investigation may give protection to industrial plants where war materials are being fabricated. The G-Men have become an essential arm of our national defense.