

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

1/10/38
[Jan. 15, 1938]

VELVET BALL - THE LONG WAY AROUND. Washington public schools provide noon-day lunches for needy children from funds that are raised by private effort. Each year, ritzy Washingtonians stage what is known as a Velvet Ball, invite dignitaries and notables as sponsors and patrons and donate the proceeds to the lunch fund. This year a gentleman from an eastern state was engaged to stage the ball. Tickets were to sell for \$6, he to receive one third of the sales for his efforts. The New York system of invitations was used, namely telegram. Cost was \$300. Programs were elaborate. Printing cost \$500. The orchestra cost \$210. The suppers cost \$2000. While all this expense was being contracted, the Better Business Bureau made an investigation and learned that the gentleman engaged to stage the ball had a shady reputation and a prison record. The Committee had to pay \$1550 to get rid of him. The final result was a highly successful ball, a great display of gorgeous gowns, but - nothing for the lunch fund. Stupidity - or have you another name for it?

MOTHERS AND BABIES. Back in 1917, we went to war to make the world safe for Democracy. The time is at hand for another quiet little war of our own to make our country safe for mothers and babies. Child birth is still attended with great hazards for mothers and children; despite our boasted advances in so many fields on the scientific front. Every 14 seconds, one baby is born. Every 37 minutes, one mother died. Every 45 seconds, one abortion occurred. More than 2000 deaths followed septic abortion last year. Every 7 minutes, one baby is born dead. Every 8 minutes, a baby died in the first month of life. Every 16 minutes, one baby died on the first day of life. There stands the tragic record in the field of maternal welfare and child birth.

BEHIND THE LUDLOW PROPOSAL. The proposal of Rep. Ludlow of Indiana for a referendum on wars on foreign soil was not born over-night. Behind it is the force of justice and righteousness. Behind it is the memory of what happened 20 short years ago. In that war to end all wars, 37,568 young men from our nation were killed in action and 182,674 were wounded, gassed or maimed. Since Armistice Day, November 11th, 1918, 529,551 World War veterans have had their rendezvous with Death. Since then, annual costs for the Veterans Administration, including all forms of compensation, have reached the sum of \$593,727,000. Today, 53,774 veterans still occupy 54 veterans' hospitals. Today, 386,586 veterans of the World War receive compensation and 107,208 dependents of veterans receive benefits. Today, 27,000 World War veterans are mental cases and facilities are being requested to care for 44,000. General Hines, Director of the Veterans Administration testified recently that the peak load of veterans' cases will not be reached until 1965. Think of that! Forty-seven years after the World War before the peak of hospital and mental cases is reached. A half century after the close of the World War before we come to the peak of the aftermath of war. Memory of this is but one of the forces against any future wars on foreign soil.

RISE AND DECLINE OF THE CCC. The creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps was a temporary measure, designed to aid in easing the nation out of the depression. As reports on its good work became manifest, an effort began to make the CCC camps a permanent institution for purposes of soil conservation, reforestation and other work. In 1937, by Act of Congress, the CCC was placed on a permanent basis. However, the number of camps has been and may be still farther reduced. The number of camps has fluctuated as follows: 1933 - 1468 camps; 1934 - 1468 camps; 1935 - 2916 camps; 1936 - 2405 camps; 1937 - 1849 camps; 1938 - 1604 camps; 1939 (beginning with July 1, 1938) - 1200 camps. Largest number of enrollees was 505,782 in 1935. Smallest will come next year with 1200 camps and a maximum enrollment of 250,000.

WEEPING WALLS. Lockfield Gardens is the name of a pretentious housing project in Indianapolis consisting of row houses and apartments, nicely landscaped, covering about 23 acres and costing more than \$3,000,000, which was built by the Government to house 748 negro families. The contract with the construction company called for completion July 1, 1937. In fact, these houses and apartments have been completed many months ago, but oddly enough, they are untenanted and thereby hangs a tale. Nine hundred and forty negro families have applied and been approved for occupancy but cannot move in. Among other reasons why these structures remain vacant are that the walls weep and leak, the water paint is discolored, the oil paint used in kitchens and bathrooms bleeds and peels, wood floors laid over moist concrete have buckled, and from 4 to 8 miles of cracks have developed in the brick walls. All in all, it is a "sick" venture and the question arises whether any losses involved will fall on the contractor who built it according to specifications or on the Government. Rent losses are estimated at \$20,000 per month.