

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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POLICING THE AIR WAVES

During the First World War when Radio was in its infancy, the problem and the task of policing and monitoring the air waves was comparatively simple. In the intervening years radio and amateur transmissions have grown to giant size and has thrown upon the government the responsibility of preventing the air waves from becoming confusion and chaos. This task is now entrusted to the Federal Communications Commission which has a force of 2,780 persons and spends in excess of \$8,000,000 annually to do its job. It supervises commercial and amateur radio, checks up on the citizenship of all persons possessing and operating radio equipment and even catalogs the so-called shortwave diathermy machines which are used for the treatment of physical ills and disease. The Commission also checks on telephone and telegraph rates and makes a continuing study of world communications. With the advent of war it has also established a war problems divisions and a foreign broadcasting intelligence division to supplement the work of Army and Navy intelligence. The listening posts of the FCC listen to more than 1½ million words of foreign broadcasting every 24 hours and reduces this vast amount of conversation to a 40,000 word report which is issued every day.

CONTROVERSIAL EXPIRATIONS IN 1943

In many pieces of legislation which are controversial in character Congress writes in an expiration date which means that when that date arrives, such legislation will be automatically repealed unless it is revived and continued by action of Congress. Notable among the laws which expire on or before June 30, 1943 are the acts under which the Bituminous Coal Commission was created, the celebrated Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act which was first enacted in 1934 and which has been twice extended, the Lend-Lease Act which was passed in March of 1941, the act which created the so-called Stabilization Fund used by the President and the Secretary of the Treasury to stabilize currencies and to meet financial crises, the act which created the Commodity Credit Corporation which handles commodity loans to farmers and administers the soybean program, the act which authorizes the President to requisition property if it is in the interest of national defense, the act which provides for three-cent postage on first class mail, and the act under which loans covering improvements to dwellings are insured by the Federal Housing Administration. Several of these are highly controversial in nature and an effort will, no doubt, be made to repeal or modify some of these acts.

SUMMARY OF THE 77th CONGRESS

The 77th Congress came to an end on the 16th day of December, 1942 after having been in continuous session for 711 days. This is the longest continuous session in the history of Congress. In that period 3,094 Senate bills and resolutions and 8,060 House bills and resolutions were introduced. There was, however, the customary mortality for only 850 public bills and 635 private bills became law. The First Session of this Congress was notable for the enactment of the Lend-Lease Act, the repeal of the cash and carry provision in the Neutrality Act, the modification of the Selective Service Act, the passage of the First War Powers Act and for the seven declarations of war. The

Second Session was notable for the Price Control Act, the drafting of 18-19 year old young men for military service, the increase of basic soldiers' pay to \$50.00 per month, the raising of the debt limit to \$125,000,000,000, the passage of an act providing benefits for the dependents of men in the service, the creation of the WAACS and the WAVES and the enactment of the largest tab bill in history. Appropriations for the two sessions were just a little short of \$200,000,000,000.

RUMBLINGS

There are definite rumblings of the Ruml plan in Congress. Already four measures have been introduced to effectuate the pay-as-you-earn tax plan. One bill would entirely forgive all 1942 taxes which will be collected in 1943 and start the plan in the calendar year 1943. A second plan would postpone all 1942 taxes until the death of the taxpayer and then undertake to collect the '42 taxes out of the estate. A third plan would postpone the collection of 1942 taxes until the war is over and then apply the new victory tax refunds and a compulsory savings for the purpose of collecting the 1942 taxes. A fourth plan would forgive all 1942 taxes on the first \$3200 and then forgive a percentage of the remaining tax. The Ruml plan is on the march.

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Letters from men in the military service indicate that there is much confusion concerning the Executive Order issued December 5, 1942 with reference to men who are 38 years of age or over and who are now in the service. This Order does not automatically release men in this age bracket. It merely means that the Army may release men over 38 and is predicated on the question of whether or not they are more useful to the Army or to industry. To secure release from the military service it is necessary for the soldier to request a release in the form of a letter addressed to his commanding officer and set forth in the letter that he deems himself more useful in a war industry than in the military service. The letter must be accompanied by a letter from an employer engaged in war work stating that if released, the soldier will be employed on war work.