

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

HOW LONG does it take to amend the Constitution? This question naturally arises in connection with the proposal to enlarge the Supreme Court. It is said that those who devised the plan to alter the Court put aside the idea of amending the Constitution because it would take too long. Let the record speak. The first ten amendments to the Constitution known as the Bill of Rights required 2 years 2 months and 20 days. The country was new, though small. Communication was difficult. One can readily understand that the first effort to amend might take more time. The 11th amendment took but 339 days for ratification. The 12th but 229 days. The 13th in 1865 but 309 days. The 14th amendment, born of the Civil war and often referred to as the "due process" amendment required 2 years and 26 days. The 15th, dealing with the right of suffrage for emancipated slaves took but 356 days. In our own time, there is the 16th amendment dealing with the right of the Federal Government to impose income taxes. It was proposed and ratified during Taft's administration. The whole process took 3 years 6 months 21 days. The 17th, providing for the direct election of Senators came in 1913 and required but 359 days. The celebrated 18th amendment was ratified in a year, a month and a day. The 19th, conferring equal suffrage on women took a year, 2 months, 19 days. The Lame Duck amendment, changing the time of sessions of Congress and the investiture of the President took 10 months and 21 days. The 21st, repealing the 18th, required 9 months and 15 days. Seven of the amendments took less than a year. Nine required less than 15 months for ratification. The average of the last eleven amendments was about 15 1/3 months. Is that very long?

HOT MONEY. Heretofore "hot money" was a term for counterfeit. Today, it means foreign money invested in American securities. It is a serious problem. Suppose you lived in Germany or Italy or Russia or some other foreign country where heavy punitive taxes and confiscation takes most of your property and your income. Naturally, you would if possible send it to some outside country or invest it in sound profitable securities in some country where conditions are more stable. That's what's happening now, and according to report, there is at least eight billions of foreign funds invested in the securities of this nation. This state of affairs embraces a double danger. That money comes to us in the form of gold and hence expands our credit base, despite all efforts to sterilize it. The bigger the credit base, the greater the danger of inflation. That's danger number one. Suppose, foreign investors should by concerted action suddenly withdraw these funds. That seems to be what happened in 1929 and helped to provoke the crash that started the depression. We might conceivably have another disastrous drop in the market with all sorts of unforeseeable consequences. Experts are now at work trying to devise a plan to prevent such unrestrained foreign investment in our securities and at the same time permit a free flow of capital between this and other nations. It's a difficult problem and one fraught with grave consequences. You'll hear more about hot money.

GLASS HOUSES. When a hill-billy preacher in Tennessee accepted \$1 for joining a tobacco-planting hill-billy man of 24 in holy wedlock with a tow-headed nine year old school girl about a month ago, it provoked a storm of nation wide proportions and started an examination of the laws of the various states to see at just what age, youngsters could marry with the parents consent. Until then, we felt ourselves rather enlightened. We even took occasion to weep copiously about child marriages in India, China, and other so-called "heathen" lands. Perhaps we better quit throwing stones. We have a few glass bungalows of our own. Right here in the nation's capital, girls can marry at 14 with parent's consent. In Missouri the age for both boys and girls is 15. In Illinois it's 18 for boys, 16 for girls. In New York it's 16 and 14. In Virginia, Maryland, Mississippi, Idaho and some other states a common law marriage between boys of 14 and girls of 12 is legal. Inscrutable are the ways of love but perhaps the lawmakers should put a few hobbles on Cupid.

GOLD AND SILVER. Legislation dealing with gold and silver policies of the government are not only interesting but baffling. One never knows what will happen. Just about the time a money expert thinks that our financial house is in order, something goes askew and it gets all out of kilter. Take for example the Silver Purchase Act of 1934 under which the Secretary of the Treasury was directed to continue buying silver until the price went to \$1.29 an ounce or until the amount of silver in our monetary stock should be one fourth of all the gold held by the Treasury. On June 19, 1934, it would have been necessary to have about 2.6 billion dollars worth of silver to bring about this ratio. Then the Treasury began to buy silver. It had no discretion in the matter. The Silver Purchase Act was a positive mandate on the Secretary of the Treasury. So far under this act, the Treasury has purchased 915 million ounces of silver at 60¢ an ounce and in addition acquired 113 million ounces under the President's nationalization order of August 9, 1934. What is the score

between these two precious metals. On June 19, 1934 we needed 1.3 billion ounces to bring about this ratio. After acquiring more than a billion ounces, we still need more than 1.0 billion ounces. Sounds funny don't it. Like a mirage in the desert. The longer you walk toward it, the further it seems away. What's the reason? A very simple one. The Treasury continues to buy gold and the more gold it buys the longer it takes to accumulate enough silver to bring about the ratio. If that silly silver metal would go up to \$1.29 an ounce, the Treasury could quit buying silver. But it don't. Believe it or not as old man Ripley says, newly mined silver is being purchased by the Treasury for 78¢ an ounce while the world price of silver is only 45¢ an ounce. Hence, the Treasury pays the western miners 78¢ an ounce for silver but the dentists, jewelers, silversmiths and others buy it for 45¢. What do you make of this, Sherlock? When we began buying silver the price was 44¢ an ounce. After astronomical purchases, it is 45¢. So what?

WHAT DID THEY DO BEFORE. You've often heard people ask the question: What did those on relief work do before the depression came on? It's a very pertinent question. In January of 1936, the Social Research Division of the WPA classified 361,207 male and female workers in Illinois who were eligible for WPA work. While the survey is a year old, it is nevertheless interesting. Of this number, 111,622 had no known occupation, 24,368 were inexperienced persons mostly under 24 years of age, 26,882 were or had been operating or employed on farms, 24,797 were personal service and domestic workers such as barbers, cooks, servants etc, 39,987 were unskilled workers, 55,228 were semi-skilled workers in manufacturing and industry, 15,537 were semi-skilled workers in building and construction, 12,591 were skilled workers and foremen in manufacturing and other industries, 21,420 were skilled workers in the construction and building business, 8,639 had been salesmen, either commercial traveling salesman or in stores and shops, 10,441 were office workers, 6,320 had at one time or another been contractors or operators of their own businesses whether large or small, and 3,375 were professional and technical workers. This latter class includes teachers, preachers, actors, artists, lawyers, doctors, dentists, etc. These general groups are broken down into 160 different individual classifications and it's quite amazing to note how generally the depression affected all classes. Such a survey, made in every community would assist materially in finding the remedy for our unemployment problem.

SESQUI CENTENNIAL CONGRESS. It hasn't started yet but undoubtedly, since this is the 75th or sesqui-centennial Congress, somebody will propose some kind of celebration or commemoration before it goes into oblivion. Conceivably, it may be commemorated in connection with the 150th commemoration of the Constitution. These milestones in our national history bring forth bits of timely and interesting information. We submit some of them. In the history of the Congress, 22 negro Representatives and 2 negro Senators have served. The two Negro Senators were both from Mississippi. One served for a year, the other for 6 years. The latter, Blanche K. Bruce, was once a slave. After his term in the Senate, he was appointed by Garfield as Register of the Treasury. Justin S. Morrill of Vermont holds the record for longest continuous service, having served in House and Senate for 43 years and 9 months. Oldest living member is Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas who was elected in 1902 to fill a vacancy caused by the death of his father. He has served continuously in House and Senate since that time. One Senator served in the U. S. Senate from three different states. He was James Shields. He was born in Tyrone County, Ireland and served Illinois, Missouri and Minnesota as a U. S. Senator. Senator Joe Robinson has the distinction of having been a Member of Congress, Governor of Arkansas, and Senator from Arkansas all in the space of two weeks. He resigned from Congress on January 14, 1913 and was inaugurated as Governor of Arkansas on January 16th. On January 28th, 1913 he was elected Senator and took his seat on March 10th, 1913.

EXCERPTS. The life of a dollar bill is about 9 months. Average life of bills of all denominations is about one year. That's why Uncle Sam buys about 1 3/4 million pounds of distinctive paper every year to print new money. There are still outstanding, presumably hidden in the mattresses or elsewhere, 230 million dollars in the old fashioned bills - the long kind. Tuberculosis was formerly the greatest killer. Today it is in 7th place. Heart disease is now public enemy number One. The average life expectancy of men is 60.8 years. For women it's 64.4 years. Who said they were the "weaker vessels"?