

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT  
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BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

People still write to Abraham Lincoln. One letter from a widow addressed to him in care of the Lincoln Memorial is worthy of comment. It reads as follows: Dear sir: I am writing you a few (lines) as to aske you is it eany (any away (way) for a witer (widow) lady to get a check. I am working on has (housework) and been working thataway for 5 years and I ain't never received a check yet and listen Mr. I am in a kneedy condishion I have 6 childrens and I ain't got no husband to help none and I can't never receive no check to help buy nothing to eat and nothing to wear and nothing to sleep on. I am looking for one going on 5 years and listen Mr. if you can sea eany away for me to receive one please sir send me by Christmas. I aint got clothes and nothing to so (sew) this is all. From \_\_\_\_\_ to Washington, D.C. to the headquarters." This letter came to the office of the National Capital Parks Commission. The office force took up a collection which netted \$12.50 and sent the widow a money order. Her predicament was also reported to the Federal Security Agency. Fearing that the incident might provoke more mail addressed to Lincoln, the money order was forwarded as coming from Santa Claus.

UNDERESTIMATING.

Underestimating is a polite term for guessing. It makes in order the story of the man in an asylum for those mentally deficient who cupped his hands and asked: "Guess what I got?" "A horse" ventured one of his fellow inmates. "Nope" came the reply. "A mule" was the second guess. "Nope" said the man. "An elephant. said his friend for a third guess. Taking a slight peek in his cupped hands again, he slyly queried, "What color is it?" War Department officials made an equally good guess in connection with cantonment costs for the first 1,190,000 young men to be inducted into the Army. Their estimate of cost was \$609,425,525. It is now contended that labor and material costs have increased and that underestimation of their requirements and changes of plans have further increased their costs. Consequently, they are now asking for an additional \$338,880,000 to complete the program. Would you say that missing their estimate by 338 million was good estimating or would you?

WAR PRICES.

One of the phenomena of the World War of 1917 was the upsurge of prices and the cost of living. Recognizing the danger that this may happen again as defense funds find their way into the pockets of consumers, the Administration is already making a determined effort to prevent an undue increase in living costs. Whether the effort will be successful remains for Time to tell. A glance at our Canadian neighbors to the North indicates that prices are advancing sharply under the stimulus of the war boon. Compared with the price levels that existed in August of 1939, Canadians now pay 10% more for food, 4% more for rent, 10% more for fuel and light, 13% more for clothing, 10% more for home furnishings and 1½% more for sundries. While there has been some increase in prices in the United States, the highest was in foods which advanced about 4% since August 1939. Most other items in the above list of ordinary expenses increased less than 3%. The War Department is making constant studies of living costs as affected by emergency and war conditions.

UNCLE SAM'S BIG LITTLE BANK.

Uncle Sam operates a big bank for small depositors. It is the Postal Savings System. It was created in the Taft administration by Act of Congress. It has 2,816,408 depositors scattered thro the 48 states and Alaska. Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Hawaii. Illinois leads the list with 395,047 persons who deposited an average of \$480.55 in this System. That means that 50 out of every 1000 persons in the state have used the Postal Savings System during the last fiscal year. The average for the whole country is 21. Total deposits on June 30, 1940 were \$1,293,292,778. Thus, Uncle Sam owes more than 1¼ billion to 2 4/5 million persons who have saved their money thro the post offices of the nation.