

[Feb. 23, 1935]

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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GOLD THAT GLITTERS. Morally, the Gold Decision by nine learned men was not so glittering after all. Very patently, it was a sacrifice to expediency, accomplished by the strong arm of circumstance and not by logic. Eight of the nine Justices in substance said that if Uncle Sam issues and sells a bond containing a promise to pay in gold, the good old Uncle should be compelled to stick to his promise. Only Justice Stone felt that Congress had plenary power to stabilize the currency of the nation by appropriate action. But to save Uncle Sam from the deleterious consequences of their own logic, four of the Justices joined Justice Stone to save the national "face." In substance it was a case of saying that Uncle Sam made a promise in a bond, that he broke his promise, that he shouldn't have broken it, but since he did, it would become necessary in the public interest to deny redress to the holders of the bonds containing the promises. It's like the old wheeze about the man who acknowledges a debt and then adds "Try and collect it." As for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Co. bonds which contained a gold clause, the Court stated that in respect of private, state, municipal, corporate and other bonds, the Federal power was a superior power and could therefore rightly regulate or alter the value of our money and they would in essence have to be satisfied with payment in devalued dollars. Thus endeth the suspense.

PARADOX. Down in Mississippi lives one Oscar Johnson, a cotton planter with a good solid name who farms 50,000 acres. Oscar was never very enthusiastic about the Bankhead Cotton Bill which by legal compulsion effected a reduction in the amount of cotton planted during the last crop year. Since the operation of the Bankhead principle, things have been happening. Our own cotton acreage dropped to 27 million, foreign acreage in all parts of the world rose to 45 million. Recently our exports of cotton have declined by several million bales and the situation is a bit alarming to say the least. The Department of Agriculture decided to send a man to the Old Country to look into the situation and make a report. Who did they send? A 100% Bankhead Bill enthusiast? Nope! They've sent Oscar Johnson.

COMMITTEE WORK. The House has 47 standing committees. These are the work shops where legislation is fashioned much as a blacksmith fashions a horseshoe - by hard work, study, much oratorical pounding on the anvil of debate. Take a peep. The so-called Home Loan Bank Bill, an administration measure consisting of amendments to the Home Loan Bank Act, the Home Owners Loan Act, and the National Housing Act, had been prepared by departmental experts and submitted to Congress. The bill is referred to the Banking Committee. The Chairman determines on hearings to find out what it's all about. For days, the Committee listens to witnesses, ask questions, argues and debates. Mr. Fahey, Chairman of the HOLC comes before the committee. Likewise Mr. Moffett of the Federal Housing Administration. Also Mr. Russell, General Counsel for the HOLC. Also Mr. Bodfish, Executive Vice President of the U.S. Building & Loan League. Many others come. The hearings end after a week and the Committee goes into Executive session behind closed doors. First, the bill is read thro and those sections approved to which no amendments will be offered or which are not in controversy. Then the committee returns to the debatable sections and the shaping begins. There are motions to strike out whole sections, amendments to change other sections, amendments to add new sections. For days, the members argue, debate, deliberate, fuss, study. All is done with even temper, with friendly spirit. Often witnesses and experts are called back to clarify disputed points. The measure is finally perfected. The Chairman gets it placed on the calendar, arranges for it's consideration. Then the fun begins - if you care to call it that. Four hundred other members, moved by sincere considerations, start whacking at it, seeking to insert other amendments or to revise, alter, change and strike out. Committee members then begin to battle valiantly for their brain child and it becomes a lively performance. Passing the House, the measure goes to the Senate Committee for hearing, then to the Senate floor, where it is often changed in many particulars. The Senate reports back to the House and asks for a conference on differences between the two bodies. Conference committees of 5 or 10 members are appointed by each body to go into a huddle and seek to compromise the difference. A conference report is drawn up. The conferees report back and ask for adoption of the conference report. Another battle looms on confirmation of the report and when all is in agreement, the bill goes to the White House. Fashioning laws is a slow, deliberate, sometimes painful process. Despite caution and study, how many imperfections still creep in.

HAILE SELASSIE I. Kings of Kings, Conquering Lion of Judah, Elect of God, alleged lineal descendant of the Queen of Sheba, is a dark-bearded, beady-eyed ruler who wears a purple coat, close fitting white pants, and presides over the destinies of 17 million Ethiopians in Abyssinia, an inland country in the northeast section

of Africa. Italy controls Eritrea on the Northeast side of Abyssinia and France controls French Somaliland on the South so that for years Abyssinia had no sea outlet. Twenty years ago, smart Frenchmen wrangled a railroad concession out of Abyssinia, got most of the business and trade at Italy's expense. Italy tried as far back as 1896 to get concessions, failed, started a war and was defeated. History records that the Ethiopians ate 1800 slain Italian soldiers. The sting persists. Recently, Italy charged the fierce Abyssinian tribesmen with atrocities on Italian soldiers, demanded reparations. Selassie refused and defied. Mussolini determined to send troops and we have the makings of war. War will be no sport there. The temperature averages 135 degrees, waters are fever laden, equatorial fever flies and poisonous malarial mosquitoes abound. Bombing planes are of little value, for Addis Abbaba, capital of Abyssinia has but a dozen permanent structures.

BODFISH. Expressions like "odds bodkins" and "odds fish" are popular in England, corresponding to "You tell them" or "I'll say" in this country. It may be that the name of Morton D. Bodfish is derived from these expressions but what he started to say was that he is a pleasing, affable, debonair, well groomed and extremely able young man, who is Executive Vice President of the United States Building & Loan League. This league represents some 4000 building & loan associations, has a deep interest in home financing and home building legislation and hence, Mr. Bodfish oftens appears before the Banking Committee which considers Housing, HOLC, Home Loan Board, and other legislation. He is a treat. He calls each committee member by name when answering questions, handles all questions in a definite, concise, and accurate way, begets the confidence of committee members and "knows his stuff." No axes to grind, no selfish motives, no interest other than that of millions of building and loan members, it is doubtful if they could find a better representative of their interests if they combed the nation with a fine-tooth comb. There should be more like him.

FOREIGN SERVICE. The U. S. maintains 16 embassies, presided over by ambassadors who received \$17,500 per annum; 44 Legations in charge of envoys extraordinary or ministers Plenipotentiary who receive \$10,000 except those to China and the Netherlands who receive \$12,000. Foreign service officers are divided into 8 classes receiving from \$3500 to \$10,000 and three unclassified divisions receiving from \$2500 to \$3000. In additions, there are 5 grades of Senior Clerks receiving from \$3000 to \$4000 and 3 classes of Junior Clerks receiving from \$2500 to \$2750.

KAPITAL KWIPS. If Western Union and Postal, now employing 50,000 people are compelled to merge, estimates are that 15,000 will lose their jobs ... of the 166 dirigibles built since 1900, only two still fly, namely the German Graf and the U. S. Los Angeles which is now stored at Lakehurst, N. J. ...Congressman Patman, bonus advocate charges that the Bank of America in California of which National Legion Commander Belgrane is Vice President collects \$3750 daily in interest on Government bonds and insists that the same privilege should be extended to ex-service menA Washington Undertaker has a cigar taken from the coat of an American sailor who lost his life on the Battleship Maine in 1898. The bodies were removed from the Maine in 1911 and altho the cigar was under water for 13 years, it is in perfect condition.....The first Townsend mass meeting was held in San Diego, California on May 17, 1934 and total assets of the organization were only \$7.69. Since then thousands of clubs have been organized and assets are \$400,000....Susan B. Anthony, dynamic worker in the cause of women's rights, altho dead many years, was revered with memorial services last week, the 115th anniversary of her birth. She labored for the 13th amendment to the Constitution to give equality to freed slaves and for the 19th amendment to give political equality to women. Once, when a follower promised to pray for her, Miss Anthony curtly replied, "Pray with your hands and feet; I like prayers that take the form of work.".....Illinois has 28 state institutions and it's institutional population consists of 11,436 prisoners, 26,178 insane, 6365 feeble minded, 634 deaf, 326 blind, 716 in correctional schools, and 1507 in veterans homes.