

THE PERFECT INVESTIGATION. You've no doubt heard of perfect crimes, perfect lovers, perfect golf, and perfect technique in the arts and sciences but incline your ears as we inform you of at least one perfect Congressional investigation. The Department of Commerce as you know is a sprawling government department that looks after everything from measurement of tides in Honolulu to credit reports on Parisian purchasers of American products. It maintains an office in Paris. In that office worked a lady. For aught we know she may have been young, middle-aged or elderly. She was an American lady. Her first name is Beryl and her last name McCann. For reasons quite unknown to us she was discharged from the Paris office, whereupon she conducted a one-man or perhaps a one-woman sit-down-strike. It was of no avail and she returned to the states to renew her protest to the Department of Commerce. Now it happens by the inexorabilities (if there be such a word) of Fate that Miss McCann had a sister in law. And by the same inexorabilities, that sister-in-law had an Uncle and strangely enough that Uncle was a Congressman. But even more to the point is the fact that Uncle Congressman was chairman of a sub-committee of the powerful House Appropriations Committee which handles the appropriations for the Department of Commerce. Now you've guessed it! The Uncle took a hand and did a bit of investigating himself. In fact, he even took a trip to Paris in company with a Department of Commerce officer to look into that and other matters. In a sense nothing came of it and Miss McCann was not re-instated into her former or into any other position. But the Uncle Congressman was quite impressed with Miss McCann. So deep and abiding was the impression that it flowered into romance and ripened into marriage and on February 20th, the Uncle Congressman and Miss McCann were wed in Washington. Uncle in the case happens to be William B. Oliver of Alabama who served until the last Congress. He is a cultured and highly respected gentleman who was and is respected and admired by all members of Congress. Thus did the investigation come to a perfect end by the joining of investigator and investigatee.

OF INTEREST TO COAL MINERS. Consideration by the Congress of the Guffey-Vinson Coal Control bill to regulate the sale and distribution of coal gives current interest to the state of mining in Illinois for the last twenty years. In 1918, 85,965 miners were employed in Illinois. Their basic wage was \$5.70 per day, the average work time for the year was 238 days and they produced 89,291,105 tons of coal. Five years later (1923) the number of miners increased to 99,714, the basic wage went to \$7.50, tons produced dropped to 79,310,075 and the number of days worked dropped to 158. So while the basic wage increased, the miners annual income was less because of less work days. In 1932, the number of miners dropped to 47,597, tonnage dropped to 33,474,145, the basic wage dropped to \$5.00 the number of days worked dropped to 107 and the annual income of the miner was less than half of that in 1933. The year 1935 showed but slight improvement. The number of miners increased to 49,100, tonnage increased to 45,013,278 tons, basic wage went to \$5.50 and number of days worked to 160. The coal industry is still a sick industry.

CONSTITUTION CONSCIOUS. The lawmakers have become Constitution conscious as is indicated by the number of resolutions introduced proposing amendments to that famed document. Thirty-six such resolutions have been introduced in the House and sixteen in the Senate. The authors propose a vast variety of amendments. Some would increase the Presidential term to six years; some would increase the terms of representatives to four years; some would confer power upon Congress to deal with questions of wages and hours; some would once more revive national prohibition which came in as the 18th amendment and went out as the twenty-first amendment; some would forbid the Federal or state governments to issue tax exempt securities. One such proposal discloses an item of interest. If Congress enacts an appropriation bill containing many separate items of appropriation, the President does not now have power to veto any specific items in such a bill. He must approve or disapprove the measure in its entirety. There might be items in such bills which he would like to blue pencil but if he does so, the entire bill must go back to Congress for revision and that would consume weeks of time.

TEN ACRES OF STONE. Egypt had her Temple of Karnak with its hall of columns, ancient Greece had her Parthenon, New York has her Empire State Building, but Washington has the largest office building in the world. It is the home of the Department of Agriculture. The new south structure is an amazing place. At nine in the morning, 5800 clerks, stenographers, experts, scientists, administrators and others pour pell mell into its 21 entrances, flock to its 37 elevators and soon thereafter are all disposed in its 4500 rooms that front on seven miles of corridors. Years ago we heard much of the giant Commerce Building but the Agricultural building exceeds it in floor space by 222,000 square feet. It contains 11 million bricks. It has 2300 electric clocks to apprise the folks when it's time to eat and when to quit. Twenty-seven "hello girls" are kept busy plugging on 5000 telephone lines. Two cafeterias and two lunch rooms serve 3500 lunches daily. It's far cry from this immense structure back to 1862 when the Department of Agriculture was created and had but 99 employees. Today it has 11,000 employees in Washington alone so that the present structure houses but little more than half of its Washington personnel. It has 12 branch libraries which circulate 275,000 volumes and periodicals on every agricultural subject under the sun from the production of peanuts to the remedy for stringhalt in horses.

FLOOD LEDGER. Flood, fire, war, pestilence appeal to our sense of drama. But the dramatic is shortlived, never sustained. It is soon forgotten, save by the victims. Then comes the grim business of inventory. Take then a peep in the flood ledger. This disaster affected 177 counties in 11 states. Population of the stricken area is $7\frac{1}{2}$ million. Homes of $1\frac{1}{4}$ million people were flooded. Three quarter of a million needed Red Cross care. 23,783 homes were partially or completely destroyed. 117 water supply companies servicing nearly $1\frac{3}{4}$ million persons were put out of operation. The work of rehabilitation begins. It is the relentless struggle between man and Nature.

PAGE THE G-MEN. We were laboring at our desk, pondering the problems of state. The door opened. A little oldish lady with kindly face and inoffensive manner came in. She chatted affably for a moment, then placed a pamphlet on our desk and walked out. It was a pamphlet of 6 large pages, printed on one side and bound in blue cover. We read a portion of it and were intrigued. We took it home and read it leisurely. It was titled "Petition and Complaint to Congress and the Senate." It began with the contention that the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped by Japanese Army Officers working in conjunction with some Hohenzollern agents. The alleged motive was the acquisition of certain aviation interests in China. That the plot was hatched in a studio on one of New York's busiest thoroughfares. That the kidnapper dropped the baby and caused its death. That a host of witnesses have intimate knowledge of the plot and have attempted to secure cooperation from state and Federal authorities but in vain. That the symbol on the ransom notes, namely two intersecting circles in blue, a solid red disc in the middle, with three small spaced holes and two wavy lines are a combination of the symbol on a Junker monoplane, the Japanese merchant flag, and the secret code used during the war. Wherefore the Chairman of the Committee of witnesses who was a world war veteran with the Intelligence Service of the U.S. Army wants Congress to investigate and call a lot of witnesses.

BOTTLE STOPPERS FROM OAK TREES. Have you ever wondered about those bobbing corks that indicate when a sunfish is nibbling or about corks to put in bottles and whether they bore any relation to agriculture? Well they do. But here's the story. Cork derives from the bark of the cork oak tree. If you go in for fancy names it's the *Quercus suber*. Virtually the world's entire supply comes from France, Spain, Sicily, Portugal, Sardinia and the countries of Northern Africa. They produce some 210,000 metric tons annually. The U.S. imported about \$7,000,000 worth of cork annually. It is estimated that about 11 billion crowns, corks, and cork-lined screw tops are used every year in the U.S. for bottle stoppers. That's a lot of stoppers. There are but $4\frac{1}{3}$ million acres of cork trees in the cork producing countries and many of these trees are old and badly tended. Our cork industries realized that cork might some day become a problem so they began to cast around for possibilities of producing cork trees in the U.S. On a survey, they found cork trees in California. In fact, about 1500 such trees were located, growing in different parts of the state under different conditions. Many years back, a number of trees were planted and they now range from six to twelve inches in diameter. Efforts are now being made to get people to use some of the rolling hay land in California and plant it to cork trees. It will prove a profitable investment on such land altho it will take a long time. First, it takes a bit of money to set out cork trees. Secondly, it will take about 20 or 30 years before they can be commercially stripped of their cork bark but once they get to that point, cork trees will help to support the children, the grandchildren and the great grandchildren of the farmer who plants cork. It offers a way to a cash crop for what may now be regarded as some of our surplus land. So endeth this corking paragraph.