

3/9/40

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

PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL PRIMER.

On November 5th, 1940, the voters will select a President. The candidate who receives a majority of the "electoral" votes will become President. It is possible for a candidate to receive less than a majority of the "electoral" votes. This has happened several times. As provided by law, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes in the "electoral college" to win. The electoral college is nothing more than a term applied to the group of Presidential electors who will be designated to cast the vote of each state. The number of electors is 531. This number you will note is equal to the number of Senators (96) plus the number of Members of Congress (435). Each state therefore has an electoral vote equal to the sum of its Senators and Congressmen. In the case of Illinois it is 2 plus 27 or 29. A majority of the electoral college is 266. Therefore the candidate for the Presidency must receive 266 votes to win. Whether a candidate gets 95% of all the popular vote in a state or 75% or 60% or 51% is of no special importance so far as the Presidency is concerned. All he needs is a majority. The 10 states in the "solid south" have 113 electoral votes. The 5 border states have 56. It is apparent therefore that the real 1940 battleground lies in New York with 47 votes, Illinois with 29, and California with 22.

AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

In the last quarter of a century, there have been 65 bills before Congress dealing with the question of pollution of our streams and rivers by means of sewage and industrial waste. Only one was enacted in all that period and it was rather innocuous and ineffective. Last week, the House passed a bill creating a Division of Stream Pollution Control in the U.S. Public Health Service. But the importance of this measure lies in an amendment which was adopted and which had the support of the Izaak Walton League. That amendment did three things. First, it provided that new sources of pollution should not be permitted without approval of the Division of Anti-Stream Pollution. Second, it declared it to be Federal policy that the discharge of new sources of pollution into our streams is against public policy unless first reviewed and approved by the Health Service. Finally any state, or Federal health agency or municipality may request the Federal District attorney to proceed against pollution in order to prevent or abate it and the District attorney "shall" bring such action when so requested. If this provision remains in the bill, there is some hope that we stand on the threshold of the period when the destruction of our streams by pollution will come to an end and fishing may once more be restored.

SOFTENING THE WORLDS MIND TOWARD PEACE.

One of the arguments used in behalf of an extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act was that these trade agreements tended to "soften the mind of the world toward peace." The facts on this item are a bit disturbing. The naked score reads about as follows:

The Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act was passed by Congress and approved on June 12th, 1934. Italy invaded Ethiopia Oct. 2, 1935. Germany took over the Saar Valley Mar. 1, 1935. The Spanish Civil War began on July 18, 1936. Japan invaded China on July 7, 1937. Austria was absorbed by Germany on March 15, 1938. The Sudetenland in Czecho-Slovakia was absorbed during the 10 day period from October 1st to the 10th, 1938. Hungary was absorbed on Nov. 2, 1938. From Sept. 30 to October 10th, 1939. Russia threatened the Baltic nations and made mutual-assistance pacts with Esthonia; Latvia and Lithuania. Bohemia and Moravia were absorbed on March 14, 1939. Memel was taken over on March 22, 1939. Danzig was taken over on Sept. 1, 1939. Finland was invaded by Russia on Nov. 29th, 1939. If this indicates a "softening" of the world mind, we sincerely hope we shall never experience a "hardening" of the world mind.

WHAT! MORE ISLANDS?

Recently, a U. S. Senator proposed that we take over all the French and British Islands in the Carribean Sea by purchase and apply the proceeds to the war debt. In addition they are regarded by some as essential to the defense of the Panama Canal. It's not as rosy as it sounds. Twenty-three years ago, we purchased the Virgin Islands from Denmark for the sum of \$25,000,000 and they have proved to be a vexation and headache ever since. Millions of emergency funds have been dumped into these islands but to no avail. Meanwhile, the population has diminished. We had a Naval Station there ten years ago, but it was withdrawn. The Army has not only not seen fit to fortify these islands but has probably not even made a survey of them. What is true of the Virgin Islands is also true of Puerto Rico. In the last 8 years, at least \$70,000,000 of the American taxpayers money has been expended to relieve the distress in Puerto Rico, but it has not been effective. Pertinent question: Should we take over more islands which have little or no defensive value and which will prove costly to the Federal Treasury?

PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITIES.

V. Robert Alphonso Taft - Republican.

On March 8, 1930, William Howard Taft, President from 1908 to 1912 and later Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court passed away after a life of great accomplishment which was often marked with bitter controversy. March 8, 1940, just a decade later, his son Robert A. Taft, now a member of the U.S. Senate is waging an active campaign for the Republican nomination for the Presidency. Thus does the stream of our national life embrace the activities of father and son in the domain of public service. Robert Taft will be 51 in September 1940. He graduated from both Yale and Harvard, was married in 1914 and is the proud father of four sons. In 1917 he served as assistant counsel to the U.S. Food Administration; in 1919 he was counsel for the American Relief Administration. He served five years in the lower house of the Ohio legislature and was the Speaker in 1926. Thereafter he served one term in the Ohio Senate. His term in the U.S. Senate began on January 3, 1939. He might be described as solid, thoro, plain-spoken, unromantic, a keen student, an extremely able lawyer, earnest and forthright.