

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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PHYSICAL 1917 vs PHYSICAL 1941.

Are we softer than a generation ago? Selective Service Officials are concerned over the fact that a larger percentage of men are being rejected for military service for reasons of physical unfitness than in 1917. In 1917, 35% were rejected as against 40% in 1941. Considering that in 1917, men with minor defects were accepted for limited service such as company clerks, the difference in percentage would be even higher now. While medical standards may differ somewhat, the essential fact remains that the problem of physical unfitness is causing genuine concern. A theory has been advanced that heretofore our national accent on such sports as baseball and football where a few men participate and a vast number merely watch has been misplaced and that the time is at hand to undertake a national athletic program under which body-building and body-hardening sports will predominate.

HE WHO GETS CUSSSED!

What is this business of "priorities"? How does it work? What does it do? An example will serve. Take aluminum. Suppose there is a shortage of aluminum. It's uses are many. It is used in pots and pans, in airplanes and munitions. If it is essential and indispensable to items of national defense, obviously and industry manufacturing airplane motors should have preference over one which makes aluminum skillets or cocktail cups. In other words, defense industries have priority over non-defense industries. The right to give this preference is provided by law. But somebody must set up a list of industries and rate them according to their importance in defense and then issue certificates of priority or preference. This is the task of the Priorities Division of the Office of Production Management. The head of that division is Mr. Stettinius. He must determine what industries get first call on defense materials. It is obvious therefore that in the case of an industry that is entirely dependent on aluminum and which manufactures something that is not essential to defense, Mr. Stettinius decision could cripple or destroy such an industry. If acute shortages develop, he will be the man who gets cussed.

BRITISH TAXES.

In recent days, comparative tables of British and U. S. taxes on the basis of a certain income have been widely published to indicate how light our taxes really are in comparison. It should be pointed out that in Britain, Parliament alone has the power to tax whereas in the U. S. there are Federal taxes, state taxes, local taxes and special taxes. There are also indirect or hidden taxes in this country which are not in vogue in Britain. British taxes consist of an income tax, customs and excise taxes on imports, a defense contribution tax, estate and inheritance taxes, a motor tax, a stamp tax on documents, and a purchase tax on luxuries. Oddly enough customs and excise taxes are estimated to produce about 2½ billions in 1941 and constitute the largest single source of revenue. Despite heavy taxes, the British deficit for the fiscal year 1941 is estimated at more than \$7,000,000,000.

THE VEIL OF THE FUTURE.

War strikes across human emotionalism and makes the spirit grope for comfort and assurance. Will we go to war? Will it be a long war? What will happen? Will we send an army? The uncertainties of the future direct the attention of the people to the occult and esoteric things in the hope that somewhere in that mystic and elusive domain there may be found a grain of hope. Perhaps this accounts for the present interest in the Capitol and elsewhere in the predictions of astrologers and soothsayers. For the moment, Michael Nostradamus, famed court astrologer to the King of France in the early 16th century, who is alleged to have predicted airplanes and submarines is being commonly discussed in many circles. Even an Army Major called at the Congressional Library for a copy of Nostradamus works in order to check his predictions. Such are the fears of uncertainty.