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THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT

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BILL OF THE MONTH

Honors for the most pungent, aromatic and delectable bill of the month must go to a member from Iowa who seeks an appropriation of \$15,000 to be used by the Secretary of Agriculture in developing a breed of Onions that are immune to insect pests or which is resistant to insects. We always felt that even the mildest kind of an onion imparted that characteristic fragrance that would wow any kind of an insect, human or otherwise and keep 'em away but apparently another tradition is shattered. The same bill seeks \$10,000 for the collection of data to be used as a basis for determining hail insurance premiums on onions. We always thought the onion in all his stately and impeccable strength could even keep away the hail stones but it appears that when the experts get on the job, armed with \$10,000 and a lot of actuarial tables, even this cherished belief is headed for the rocks. Such are the mutations of time and circumstance - when once investigated by Congress.

WE HAVE AN INVESTIGATION FOR IT

There are now pending before House and Senate Committees, 67 resolutions which authorize investigations of everything and everybody. Here may be found resolutions to investigate Frances Perkins or the Passamquoddy Power Project in Maine, onions and old age pensions, Silver purchases and South American bonds, unemployment and Un-American activities, Forestry and the Florida Ship Canal, freight rates in Texas and futures grain trading in Chicago, Radio censorship and Railroad Reorganization, Tax Revision and Trade Agreement modifications. One such resolution even calls for the investigation of the feasibility of construction of a tunnel under the Potomac River from Washington to the Virginia side. Shades of George Washington! What wouldn't the Father of Our Country say about such a proposal.

COMMISSION VS COMMISSION

In 1910, Congress created a Commission On Fine Arts to pass upon the location for statues and memorials in the nations capital and to determine on the kind and quality of such statues and memorials. In 1937, Congress created the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission and provided it with \$3,000,000 for the construction of a suitable memorial to Jefferson. The Jefferson Memorial Commission finally selected an architect, determined on a site, approved the type and plan of the Memorial, approved a contract for the foundation of the proposed memorial and then called for bids on the Memorial itself. After the bids were in, the Fine Arts Commission came forward to oppose the kind of memorial planned for Jefferson because it "had it's origin in Rome during the reign of Emperor Hadrian." Expressed another way, the Fine Arts Commission believes that the artistic taste of the Jefferson Memorial Commission is - well, it's a word that would rhyme with frowsy.

ERRORS IN SOCIAL SECURITY

It was revealed before the Ways & Means Committee of the House that errors crept into the calculations of the experts who designed the original Social Security Act and that it will cost infinitely more than was first expected. Experts estimated at the time the Act was passed that 6,000,000 persons would be eligible for benefits in 1980. Now they believe the number will be closer to 13,000,000 and of course the cost will be that much higher. The birthrate is now declining at a more rapid rate than at the time the Act was passed and at the time the basis for the Act was calculated which means more old folks and a greater cost. Payroll taxes were

calculated on an average wage of \$1100 per year. In 1937, the average was only \$867, which means that the amount of the tax was smaller than estimated by the experts. All this means that the cost of annuities under the Social Security Act will be higher and that the share which the Government must pay will be greater and must be paid sooner than was estimated or the system will bog down.

ALL THIS TO BE DONE BY ONE BILL.

Here is a preview of what the next war will do to you. It's contained in a Bill introduced by Senator Bone of Washington. The purpose of the bill is set forth in the title is "To tax the profits out of war by a steeply graduated income and other taxes, in order to provide for an effective national defense, to promote peace, to encourage actual neutrality, to discourage war profiteering, to distribute the burdens of war, and to keep Democracy alive and for other purposes." That's really a big undertaking. And how it undertakes it! Here's what Uncle Sam will take for war taxes: On a \$2000 income, \$60; on a \$4000 income, \$180; on a \$6000 income, \$500; on an \$8000 income, \$1320; on a \$10,000 income, \$2640; on a \$100,000 income, \$89,210; on a \$500,000 income, \$485,210. In other words, the good old Uncle takes all or just about all under this proposal. No doubt, this bill will provoke much patriotic fervor, but before it does, permit us to point out two jokers. The first is that the tax applies to everybody whether he practices law, runs a grocery store, pulls teeth or manufactures poison gas. So it is not really a tax on war profits. The second is that this tax is in addition to such state and local taxes as already exist. It has been estimated that in the State of New York, where an income tax law with fairly heavy rates is in effect, a man with an income of \$50,000 per year would pay \$76,000 a year in income taxes to the state and the Federal Government if the Bone Bill were enacted. Obviously, the remedy would be for such a man to quit work. Fifty Senators have signified their support of the Bone Bill but it may yet prove a terrible boner.

THE PARALLELS OF HISTORY

William Jennings Bryan was born on March 19, 1860 a few months before Abraham Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency in Chicago. Thirty six years later, Bryan was to make his famous "Cross of Gold" speech in Chicago, win, the acclaim of the delegates and then receive the Democratic nomination. In 1896, when Bryan was nominated, the nation was in the throes of a panic. Among other things, 8000 businesses had failed and 156 railroads were in receivership. Many students of government attributed our troubles in part at least to the Silver Act of 1890 under which silver was purchased by the U.S. Treasury with Treasury notes and those treasury notes were then redeemed in gold. As a result of these transactions, our gold reserve finally fell below \$100,000,000 and caused general uneasiness. Now we have another Silver Purchase Act on the books - the Act of 1934, under which we purchase silver mined in this country at $64\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ per ounce and world silver at 42¢ an ounce and then give it a value of \$1.29 ounce as we issue silver certificates against it. Can it be that history may repeat itself. And, as if that were not enough, Senator Pittman of Nevada (a silver producing state) now urges the Federal Reserve Board to help the farmers by means of currency inflation to "see if that won't work."