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THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen
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WAR PROFITS. During the debate on the McSwain Bill, which in original form was euphoniously called a bill to promote peace (and so liberally amended on the floor of the House as to create a far better measure) a Congressman from Montana arose to ask the Speaker whether it would be in order under the rules of the House of Representatives to make a request that the members pause for five minutes for prayer before voting on the bill because it was likely to lead us into war. The Speaker stated that the request was not a parliamentary inquiry and could therefore not be entertained.

VANDERLIP. Once upon a time, the Chicago Tribune had a reporter named Frank A. Vanderlip. He reported financial happenings and to make his work more effective, he was provided with ownership of a single share of stock in various corporations so he could in his own right, sit in the meetings and ascertain what was taking place. He showed a peculiar flair for finance and in 1896, he became Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under President McKinley. Later he became President and then Chairman of the Board of the powerful National City Bank of New York, largest in the United States. In 1919, he retired from active banking and devoted himself to a further study of banking and finance. He is now silver haired, deliberate, slow-spoken, dignified, with a wealth of knowledge. This week he appeared before the Banking & Currency Committee of the House to testify on the pending Banking Bill of 1935. One significant statement from him: "This nation could have afforded to have incurred it's present huge debt (30 billion) if we enact the pending banking bill which will give the dollar the same debt paying power and the same purchasing power throughout this generation."

INDIAN STRUGGLE. Chief Harry Red Eagle, Osage Chief, came to town in his motor car, tightly wrapped in a gaudy blue blanket, took a room at one of the downtown hotels, and promptly released a statement to newspapers that Osage Indians are opposed to the kind of treatment they are receiving from Uncle Sam through the Government Indian Agent, John Collier. Harry Red Eagle don't think much of Commissioner Collier. A day later, there came to town, Chief Fred Lookout, also an Osage chief, took a room at the same hotel, told newsmen that the Osages wholeheartedly supported Mr. Collier. The fight is on but instead of tomahawks, scalping knives, carbines and bows and arrows, they now fight with words, petitions, and newspaper releases.

FARMERS AND IMPORTS. Congressional insistence that importation of agricultural commodities which are in direct competition with those grown by American farmers, particularly when American consumers are taxed through processing taxes to finance an acreage reduction program for the purpose of raising prices, finally provoked the Department of Agriculture to send out a release dated 3:30 p.m. March 27, 1935 under the title, "Drouth Increases Feed Grain Imports; Other Farm Imports Under Average" and then points out that imports are small and not alarming. It also seeks to show that exportations are high. Figures from this report have been quoted in various sections of the country to allay any doubts that farmers might have about such program. This bulletin is a highly plausible and convincing release but a little discernment and critical analysis will show that it does not state the case. Specifically, with reference to (1) cotton, it fails to state whereas imports of cotton cloth from Japan never exceeded 1¼ million square yards up to 1934 it increased to more than 7 million square yards and in the first two months of 1935, it went to more than 8 million square yards. (Despite this tragedy, we continue to curtail cotton production, lose our world cotton trade, impose a 4.2¢ processing tax per pound of cotton and pay cash for acreage reduction. (2) Respecting corn, the report says nothing about importations of tapioca starch (190 million pounds came in in 1933) nor does it say anything about blackstrap molasses which displaces corn in the making of alcohol. Tariff Commission figures show that 204 million pounds came into the U. S. in January and February of 1935. Nor does the report show that more corn came in the first two months of 1935 than in the entire year of 1934. Moreover, the report very plausibly compares imports of corn with a total average crop of 2½ billion bushels when in fact the 1934 crop was about 60% below that figure. Nor does the report show that only 10% of the corn crop goes to market in it's native grain form and that it is this 10% (from 200 to 300 million bushels) which has the greatest bearing on corn prices. Nor does it show that present imports as against a small crop would have several times the effect on prices that it would have in normal years. (3) With reference to dairy products, farmers will be interested to know that production of oleo margarine increased 41 million pounds in January and February of 1935 as compared with January and February of 1934. The report shows that 8 million pounds of butter were imported in the first months of 1935. It states that butter production in this country for the 6 months from September 1934 through February 1935 had been reduced by 37 million pounds, but the report does NOT state that on October 1, 1934 we had 124 million pounds of butter in cold storage. (4) While this report shows that the amount of beef imported is not substantially larger than in other years, it DOES NOT state that we had 75 million pounds of beef in cold storage on October 1st as against an average of 29 million pounds for the five years from 1928 to 1933. (5) With respect to pork imports, the reports says nothing of the fact that huge quantities of pork are in cure, and that 133 million pounds of pickled pork are in cure, marked for the account of the Emergency Relief Administration. Finally, we permit corn, oats, beef and other products to enter from the Argentine when that nation is one of those who has refused to enter the World Wheat Pact that the Dept. of Agriculture has tried so hard to negotiate. All of which proves that discernment is necessary in reading Government reports and that as Shakespeare, said, "The Devil can cite Scripture to his purpose."

BOOTLEG COAL. Year after year, there has been an increase in the "strip" method of mining coal. That is to say, a huge steam shovel strips the earth away from the coal seam (sometimes to a depth of 50 feet) and the exposed coal is dug up with the same steam shovel, washed, and loaded. One such shovel displaces as many as a 100 miners. Since 1927, the number of miners thus displaced in Pennsylvania has gradually increased. Pit mines became idle. But the miners had to eat. In winter they need fuel. Consequently they went to the mine where once they earned a good living and mined coal for their own use. The company which owned the property made no objection. Later, the miners dug a little more than what they needed and sold the excess coal to neighbors to earn a little cash. Gradually this industry grew and at present, thousands of Pa. miners, dig coal, load it on trucks, sell it just a little below prevailing prices and continue to make a skimpy living. Estimates are that 5 million tons of such "bootleg" coal were mined in Pa. last year. Occasionally, police, employed by owners of the coal properties arrest these miners, hail them before a magistrate who fines them and then remits the fine because they have no money. Miners must live and this development known as "bootleg" mining is just another depression tragedy.

OLD AGE PENSIONS. The far reaching Social Security Bill now pending before Congress, dealing with old age pensions, unemployment insurance, compulsory contributory annuities, child welfare and other matters has created an impression in some quarters that Title I of the bill is an old age pension measure. Strictly speaking, this is not the case. In the interest of accuracy, the substance of Title I is as follows: if the State of Illinois (or any other state) will enact an old age pension law, Uncle Sam agrees to pay one half the cost of such pensions, with a limit of $15 per month per person as the Federal Government's share. There are certain requirements. Any old age pension law passed by a state, must provide for such pensions at age 65 or under, except that after 1940, the age may be set at 70. No state must deny a pension to any person on the ground of citizenship in the state if such person is a citizen of the United States. Nor shall the state deny a pension if the person who is in all other respects eligible, had lived at least 5 out of the last 9 years in such state. If Illinois should pass a pension act providing for a pension of $30 per month, Uncle Sam would pay $15 or one half. If the state should provide a pension of $40, Uncle Sam would pay the limit, or $15. If the pension were set at $20, Uncle Sam would pay only $10. However, Title I is NOT an old age pension measure. IT MERELY OFFERS TO ASSIST THE STATES IN PAYING PENSIONS IF THE STATES WILL ENACT SUCH LEGISLATION.

COMPULSORY CONTRIBUTORY ANNUITIES.
Title II of the pending bill provides for old age insurance, referred to in the bill as compulsory contributory annuities to be financed by a tax on the wages of employees and upon the payroll of employers. Agricultural workers, domestic workers in a private home, casual laborers, ship's crews, government workers, and workers in educational and charitable institutions are exempt and do not come within the provisions of this measure. All wages up to $3000 are to be taxed at the rate of ½ of 1% for the first $3000, 1/12 of 1% for the next $42,000 and 1/24 of 1% on all over $42,000 with a limit of $129,000. Maximum benefits to an employee under the bill would be $85 per month. By wages, referred to above is meant the total earnings of a worker. To be eligible however, he must be under 65, have worked at least some portion of each of the 5 years from 1937 on and before reaching 65, must have earned a total of $2000 or more in that time. An example will clarify. John Jones is age 40 by 1937. He therefore can work 25 years before reaching age 65. If he earns about $19 per week and works steadily, his gross earning by the time he reaches 65 will be about $25,000. His insurance benefit starts at age 65. He will receive an amount equal to 1/2 of 1% of the first $3000 and 1/12 of 1% of $22,000. The insurance pension or benefit would therefore be $33.33 per month which he will receive for the balance of his lifetime. To pay for this, John Jones assessments would be 1% for 1937, 38, and 39, 1½% for 1940, 41 and 42 and so on until 1949 and thereafter when he will pay 3%. In his case, his assessments would be $10, the first three years. $15 the next three, $20 the next three, $25 the next three, and $30 from then on until he attains age 65. He would therefore pay a total of $630 in taxes on his wages for a monthly benefit of $33.33 the rest of his life. Meanwhile, his employer will also pay a gross tax of like per cent on his payroll, which after 1949 is expected to yield 600 million dollars annually. This is a most ambitious undertaking.

ODD BITS. A bill for $1890.50 for the funeral of President Garfield has never been paid because Congress, on a technicality refused to authorize payment. A man from Marblehead, Mass. wrote Rep. O'Connor of New York a rather insulting letter to which O'Connor replied very briefly by saying, "Dear sir: You live in the right place." The Ohio Regimental Association writes members of Congress to oppose a bill which seeks to provide a statue for General Robert E. Lee on the ground that he fought for slavery, disunion and destruction.