

4/17/37

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

MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF BUGS. Grasshoppers, chinch bugs and Mormon crickets are pesky little critters and very expensive. Congress has just appropriated a million dollars to do battle with them. The Department of Agriculture wanted two million and in the event that the first million is not enough, Congress can by a deficiency appropriation provide another million. Most of this money will be used to purchase poison bait with which to lure these varmints to destruction. The bait consists of bran and sawdust mixed with sodium arsenic. The 'hoppers like bran. The sawdust is only filler and makes the bait go further and therefore cheaper. The sodium arsenic is the stuff that takes the hop out of the 'hoppers. The million dollars is enough to employ necessary personnel and purchase about 37,000 tons of bran and 300,000 gallons of poison. That's a lot of poison and may the slaughter be terrific.

SMILING CHILDREN, SOLEMN SENATORS. Seldom do children appear before a Committee of the House and Senate except when accompanying their parents. Scarcely ever do they appear to testify. But recently, five children came before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor to testify in a sense in behalf of a bill that would provide 11 million dollars for educational work among children who are deaf and blind. These were all little girls aged 7 and 8. They came from the Maryland School for the Blind, and the Maryland School for the Deaf. "I love you," piped a deaf, golden-haired tot of 7 as she gave a demonstration of lip reading. A little girl, laid a Braille book before one of the Senators and made a few dots on a piece of heavy pad. Another little blind tot let her fingers quickly go over the dots and read "Mary had a little lamb." Senators were impressed. They were even more impressed with the statement of the U.S. Commissioner of Education that we have 2 million handicapped children in the United States. Tragedy!

BOYLAN'S FOLLY. The purchase of Alaska many years ago by the U.S. at the instance of Secretary of State Seward was referred to by historians as "Seward's Folly." The huge Commerce Building in Washington, built under the administration of Hoover (now occupied from cellar to garret) was referred to as "Hoover's Folly." Now comes "Boylan's Folly." But wait 'til we tell you the story. John J. Boylan, Congressman from the 15th district of New York City has always been a staunch admirer of Thomas Jefferson. His admiration takes the form of hero worship. To him, Thomas Jefferson is the infallible oracle of all that is good in government. Now, the distinguished Mr. Boylan has always felt that the government, the nation's capital, the monument builders and others have never done right by Mr. Jefferson. He felt and he feels that since there is a majestic shaft in honor of Washington and an impressive memorial to Lincoln, there should be a suitable memorial to Jefferson. Some years ago, he started a one man crusade in this worthy cause. In season and out, he preached the virtues of Jefferson and like Cato of old, ended with the admonition that there should be a Jefferson memorial. The fruits of this crusade were the appointment of a Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission of which Rep. Boylan is the chairman and a \$3,000,000 appropriation with which to do right by our third President. Next in order was the need for a design. An architect was engaged who submitted a design which followed the general lines of the old Roman Pantheon. It is a solid, imposing design which would do justice to some ancient emperor like Trajan or Hadrian or Caracalla but scarcely expresses the simple virtues and democratic tendencies of Thomas Jefferson. Next came the selection of a site and after much deliberation, it was determined to erect the memorial in that section of Washington known as the Tidal Basin where bloom the magnificent cherry trees which were given to this nation by Japan as a token of friendship. These cherry trees are more than cherry trees. They are the dainty pinkish lure which attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to Washington every year. They are a priceless asset to hotels, restaurants and curio sellers. The delicate cherry blossoms have more sales punch than Congress, Huey Long, The Potomac River and Pennsylvania Avenue put together. The site selected for Mr. Jefferson's memorial makes it necessary to destroy, or remove most of the cherry trees. The result! A row has developed that bids fair to shake the very foundations of the nation. Cherry Blossoms can be such powerful things!

CAN YOU SOLVE THIS? In the Department of Agriculture is a division known as the Bureau of Plant Entomology. It spends a considerable amount each year in ferreting out diseases of plants and crops, preparing bulletins on these subjects and making its findings available to farmers. Accordingly, this Bureau has employees both in Washington and in the field. Many years ago, this Bureau had a field officer in and around Tallulah, Alabama. The duties of this field officer included the hiring of men to do various kinds of work and the preparation of payrolls. Somewhere in this officer's make-up was a weak spot - an idea that he could pad the payroll, by sending in names of workers who did not exist. The payrolls were checked by a clerk in the Disbursing Office of the Department of Agriculture and certified. Checks were then drawn to cover the payrolls and sent to the field officer. These checks were made by Disbursing Clerks in the Treasury Department. Over a period of 7 or 8 years, 3900 checks, aggregating \$63,000 were drawn in the names of persons who did not exist. The field officer would then endorse a forged signature on the check and then negotiate them thro grocery stores, banks, and merchants. They in turn endorsed them and sent them in. The checks ultimately found their way to the Treasury Dept. in Washington and were paid out of the Treasury. After many

years, the fraud was discovered. Now for the question. Who is the loser? The Disbursing Clerk in the Treasury, the Disbursing Clerk in the Department of Agriculture, the bank, the merchant or who? If our smart field officer could be found, he would be the loser but he's skipped. Now, somebody must pay, because Uncle Sam generally refuses to be the loser. It was decided that the Disbursing Clerk in the Treasury is the loser, even though the checks were good on their face. He must make good or else....That of course seems unjust and inequitable. So what? A bill was introduced in Congress and passed, providing relief for the Disbursing Treasury Clerk. Meanwhile, the G-men are looking for the field officer who did a neat job of defrauding the government.

RETAILERS AND THE TYDINGS-MILLER BILL. John Jones owns a little drug store. His customers wish to buy a certain kind of razor blade so John Jones puts in a stock of blades. They sell for 50¢ a dozen. A customer comes in to buy blades, asks about the price and says: "Guess I won't take any. I can buy them downtown for 42¢." The next time the salesman comes around to sell John Jones more razor blades, he says: "No, guess I won't stock them anymore. Can't compete with those who are selling them downtown at a loss. I'll try to sell my customers something else." The salesman argues. Says he can't help it. Says that his company can't help it. Says there is no law to prevent retailers from selling his blades at whatever price they desire, even tho they take a loss on it, Says that his blades are standard, that they are in demand, that the company advertises them heavily, and that his company has on other occasions tried to make retailers charge a minimum price for his blades but that they cannot be compelled to do so. But John Jones is adamant and will not buy any more of those blades. This and other items in the grocery, drug, hardware and other lines of business which are sold below cost are known as "loss leaders" and are advertised at bargain prices to attract customers. Large corporations selling standard merchandise under their trade mark and trying to protect their trade marked articles and their quality have on occasion gone to court to compel retailers to sell at a certain price but the law was against them. Consequently, various states, including Illinois have enacted so-called Fair Trade Acts, making it possible for a manufacturer to make a contract with a retailer under which the retailer agrees to sell the goods at a certain price, with certain exceptions. Horetofore, such contracts have been regarded as in violation of the Anti-Trust Act and in restraint of trade. In 1936, the Illinois law went to the Supreme Court in a case in which a distillery filed an action against a distributor for selling trade-marked liquor below the price designated by the distillery. On December 7, 1936, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Illinois law. Pursuant to this action Senator Tydings and Rep. Miller of Arkansas have introduced the Tydings-Miller Bill which amends the first section of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act so that contracts which prescribe minimum prices or other conditions under which goods are resold will be legal and not deemed to be in restraint of trade, provided such contracts are legal under the laws of the State in which the goods are sold. Manufacturers can thereby refuse to sell to or take action against a retailer who fails to maintain a minimum price. Small retailers can club up and refuse to buy from a manufacturer unless he does maintain a minimum price. The so-called "loss leader" may therefore be ready for the legal axe.

YES, WE HAVE NO TOMATOES. Soldiers like tomatoes so the Quartermaster General who looks after the appetites of the doughboys advertised for bids for 27,306 cases of tomatoes. That's a lot of tomatoes. Tomatoes are rich in Vitamin B but that has nothing to do with this matter. Tomatoes are good for acid stomach but that has nothing to do with this matter either. On August 10, 1933 a broker, in California gave Uncle Sam a bid for these tomatoes. On that same day the bid was accepted. The broker at once made a deal with the Booth Canning Co. of California to furnish 27,306 cases of tomatoes. About that time, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was trying to get a better price on tomatoes for the growers of this luscious fruit. Now mark the date. On Aug. 9, 1933, one of the Administrators sent a telegram to the President of the Cannery League of California requesting that all tomato canners raise the price they were paying to tomato farmers by 25%. On August 11, 1933, this request went to all canners who were members of the League. All canners agreed. This of course made the cost of tomatoes to the canners 25% higher. But, here is our broker friend and the Booth Canning Company having made a contract with Uncle Sam on the basis of the tomato price before the 25% raise went into effect. This increase raised the tomato price from \$9 a ton to \$11.25 a ton. Alas and alack! A contract is a contract as you so well know and Mr. broker had to deliver. Also the Booth Canning Company had to deliver. What the Army does don't concern the AAA and vice versa. The Booth Cannery thought all this quite unfair. They suggested that Congress do something about it. Congress did. Congress with the help of a corps of engineers, some mathematicians, slide rules, logarithms, equations and assorted algebraic functions decided that the increase in the cost of tomatoes per pound was \$0.001125 and that the Booth Company was entitled to \$1966.03 because the AAA increased the price of tomatoes after the deal had been consummated. Ho-Hum.