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

ALCOHOL GASOLINE. Alky-gas is back on the front page. However, let's start at the beginning. Before the war, the dye industry was dominated by manufacturers who produced dyes from German formulas. Many of these factories were operated on German capital. Came the war. Wars are fought with every known weapon whether military, economic or political. Here then was a weapon to hand that would be of immense benefit in developing an American dye industry. Since we were at war, we might by legislation take over these German patents, pay for them, turn them over to a corporation in which American industrialists are the stockholders and make them available for our own use. Thus was the American Chemical Foundation born, with Dr. Francis P. Garvan as its President. It took over some 4500 patents at a cost of \$250,000 and then raised an additional \$250,000 to put them to work for our country. It was this Chemical Foundation and particularly Dr. Garvan with his courage and vision, who saw the possibilities of alky gasoline as a farm relief measure as well as a premium motor fuel. The Foundation watched the development of the movement for alky gas which started in El Paso Illinois, was promoted by public spirited citizens and clubs and finally achieved national recognition. This Foundation set its experts to work. For a long time, they conducted quiet, scientific researches into the feasibility of converting grain into alcohol, and mixing 10% alcohol with 90% gasoline to be used in motor cars. They made certain of their ground as they proceeded with these investigations. Interested men were sent about the country to attend meetings, make speeches, write articles on the subject. Bills were introduced in various legislatures to give preference to motor fuel that contained alcohol made from American grain in order to get the idea started. The going was slow. But behold! Today a plant is being built in Atchison Kansas to manufacture alcohol to be mixed with gasoline. It will be done by special process and the American Chemical Foundation is supplying \$200,000 for necessary equipment and machinery. This news comes at a time when the U. S. Bureau of Standards announced in the course of the meeting of the American Chemical Society in Kansas City last week that alky-gas will make a satisfactory motor fuel. Coming from an official governmental agency, that announcement will be far-reaching in its effect. It is music to the author of this column who on June 9, 1933 participated in tests between gasoline and alky-gas in the national capital along with many dignitaries from all the states of the union, only to find that the Bureau of Standards was not especially "hot" about alky gas. Once again, time marches on.

APRIL 14th. April 14th, 1936 - Primary day in Illinois. Men and women seeking national, state and local office. Voters marching to the polls. A certain tenseness as human hopes and ambitions shuttled in the balance. In Washington, the U. S. Senate listens to final arguments in the impeachment trial of a Federal Judge, the 13th in the history of the nation. The House of Representatives struggles with a number of conference reports. Two miles from the capital, a baseball park where the President throws a wild pitch and officially inaugurates the baseball season in the presence of a colorful crowd. And now, April 14th, 1865. A balmy spring night, with fragrance in the air. Carriages and victorias drawn by heavy horses clattering thro the streets. Gas lamps flickering. Newsboys hawking the Washington Chronicle. Carriages covering on a corner known as 10th & E streets, just 8 or 9 blocks from the capital. Ladies in hoopskirts and shawls. Men in long coats, top hats, wearing side-burns. On this corner stands a theatre. The play - Our American Cousin. The lobby ablaze with lamps. The theatre festooned with flags and bunting. Deafening applause as a tall, sad man and his wife enter and take seats in a box, escorted by a handsome military aide and his fiancée. A sentry paces outside the box. The tall man with wistful face laughs at the humor of the play. The audience enjoys it. Somehow it lifts the heavy sadness of four years of war. Suddenly a shot pierces the air. All eyes shift to the tall, wistful man. His long, gangling figure slumps over the rail of the box. Screams of horror. A piercing cry. "The President has been shot." Yes, 71 years ago on April 14th, our own Lincoln was assassinated. Taxi's hardly know the location of Ford's Theatre today.

CASTOR OIL. Fifty million children can't be wrong. It must be horrid stuff. Yet, we must say a few kind words for castor oil. Uncle Sam is about to purchase 40 million pounds of paper for the Government Printing Office. Millions of pounds will be used on which to print the speeches that Congressmen send to their constituents. This paper must be of such quality as to readily absorb ink so that it will dry quickly. This is election year. Millions of copies of speeches will go out in great haste. Hence, quick-drying is essential. What to do to expedite these speeches? Discovered! Paper made with castor oil. Looks no different than other kinds of paper but takes ink more readily. So Uncle Sam will buy 40 million pounds of castor oil paper, and Congressional speeches will go forth on castor oil paper.

DESTINY HANGS ON TRIFLES. Rules of procedure are to a deliberative body like the Congress what rails are to a locomotive. They constitute the track upon which legislation runs. Now consider this case. A Congressman introduces a bill in which there is much public interest. The bill is highly controversial. The Committee to which the bill is referred refuses to consider it, and puts it in the proverbial pigeonhole. What then? The introducer or any other member of Congress can file a petition to discharge that Committee from further consideration of the bill. If 218 members sign such a petition, the bill automatically comes up for debate and a vote. The rule under which this is done is known as the Discharge Rule. The actual language of the rule is, "When a majority of the total membership of the House shall have signed the motion....." Since the total membership is 435, 218 signatures would be a majority. Since the beginning of the present Congress, 6 members have died or resigned. The actual sitting membership is therefore 429. Question! Does it require 218 signatures to discharge a committee or 215 which would be a majority of the actual sitting membership of the House. The question was raised last week in connection with the Frazier Lemke Farm Refinance Bill. The petition for this bill has 214 signatures. If 215 are required, only 1 more need be obtained. If 218 are required 3 more must be obtained. Signatures are hard to get. However 1 more was assured. The Speaker was called upon to rule on this question. He ruled that 218 were required. Importance of this matter lies in the fact that if a vote could be obtained on the Frazier Lemke bill, it would have far reaching economic and political effects. A trifle, perhaps and yet one that embraces the destiny of men and things.

HATS OFF TO A VISION. Down in Texas lived a little girl who like millions of other little girls used to sing "My Old Kentucky Home" or "Old Black Joe" or "Down On The Swanee River." As she grew up, she became more and more interested in these old American ballads and folk songs and began to explore into the authorship of these songs and how they were inspired. From this, grew an abiding interest in Stephen Collins Foster, Kentucky poet and lyricist who composed the above songs. Later on she married and her husband became a Member of Congress. Her interest in folk songs did not abate. She heard about proposals to establish a memorial for Stephen Collins Foster. To some, such a memorial meant a bit of masonry and stone. To her it meant an opportunity and she started a movement to establish a memorial in the form of an endowed Foundation to lend financial assistance to talented young musicians, who were in need of aid. It became a grand vision and a short time ago, the Stephen Foster Foundation for that purpose was created. How much better to serve living and talented youth with needed assistance and keep forever green, the memories of a native poet and musician.

PARADOXES. Japan has informed this country thro our State Department that for the fiscal year ending June 1, 1936, her exporters will limit shipments of cotton rugs to this country to 700,000 square yards of Chenille rugs, 3 1/3 million square yards of hit-and-miss cotton rag rugs, and 4 million square yards of other cotton rugs. The important thing is that importations will continue. On the other side of the picture, you have (1) a drop in the world consumption of American cotton from 14,200,000 bales in 1934 to 11,300,000 bales in 1935 (2) increase in consumption of cotton produced by other countries from 10,200,000 bales in 1934 to 14,400,000 bales in 1935 (3) the Government now holding about 6,000,000 bales on which the loss will probably be around \$60,000,000. Experts did not believe our cotton supremacy would be threatened on the theory that other countries could not afford to shift their acreage from the production of foodstuffs to cotton and that other countries were not climatically and geographically adapted to cotton production. The exports have been fooled.