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

GRAPES OF WRATH COMES TO CONGRESS.

Grapes of Wrath - that dour and gloomy picturization of the sad plight of migrant families who because of dust storms, or erosion or seasonal employment or for other reasons migrate from one place to another - has come to Congress. A committee of five members of Congress will undertake an investigation of the matter to determine what makes 2,000,000 persons migrate across state lines every year in search of work and opportunity and what the remedy might be for this high mobility. Some of this migration is doubtless due to seasonal employment which lasts for only a limited time in any one spot. Some of it may lie in the allurements of higher relief payments in one state than in another. Some of it is impelled by desperation. But whatever the cause, it constitutes a comparatively modern phenomenon and Congress will try to pin down the causes and prescribe a remedy.

REGARDING OUR POTENTIAL YOUNG GENERALS

At the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, 1732 young selected men are in training for a military career as officers in the Army. They are the future Generals, Colonels, Majors, Captains and Lieutenants upon whom we depend for national defense. Of this number 288 were appointed by Senators, 1305 by Congressmen, 89 by the President, 3 by the Vice President, 90 from the Regular Army, 90 from the National Guard, 5 from the District of Columbia, 6 from Hawaii and Alaska, 3 from Puerto Rico, 40 from Honor Military Schools, 20 from sons of officers killed in the World War, 20 from enlisted men killed in the World War, 1 from the Panama Canal Zone, 4 from the Philippines, and 1 is a Foreign cadet. Now add them up. It makes 1964. But how can there be 1964 when only 1732 are at the Academy. The answer is that in the last calendar year 3 have died, 15 resigned, 1 was dropped, 3 were physically disabled, 2 were deficient in conduct and 104 were discharged as deficient in studies. It is rigorous training which only those who are physically and mentally fit, actually complete. Of such stock are officers made.

SENATE SPIKES OLD AGE AND SECURITY LEGISLATION.

Action of the Senate Finance Committee has effectively spiked all prospects of further legislation during the present Congress on matters relating to old age assistance, direct old age pensions, old age insurance and similar items. This includes the Townsend Plan, the General Welfare Federation plan and all other similar bills. On April 16th, the Senate Finance Committee adopted a resolution which sets up a Committee of 8 Senators to make a full and complete study of the old age assistance provision of the Social Security Act, old age insurance, and of all bills relating to old age pensions. This committee of 8 shall report to the full Finance Committee of the Senate as soon as practicable. The sub-committee consists of Senators George of Georgia, Connolly of Texas, Byrd of Virginia, Herring of Iowa, Johnson of Colorado, LaFollette of Wisconsin, Vandenberg of Michigan and Senator Townsend of Delaware. This committee does not expect to begin its study until December 1st and would therefore have no report to make until the next Congress which convenes on January 3rd, 1941. By this action, the Senate has indicated that it will consider no security legislation at this session.

VITALIZING THE ARMY.

Vitalize is a good word. It springs from the same root word as vitamin. It means to impart life or pep. Congress is about to vitalize the army by popping up the officers. An effective way to do this is to base promotions on length of service and then retire those officers in the top grade under a mandatory retirement provision. This action becomes necessary as a result of the thousands of officers who went into the Army during the world war and remained in the service. There are still 4200 of such officers in the service and they have stagnated in the various grades because of the present promotion system under which it will take them a long period of years to move from the grade of Captain to that of Colonel or higher. To meet this situation, the new Vitalization Bill provides for promotion from 2nd to first lieutenant after 3 years of service, to Captain after 10 years, to major after 17 years to lieutenant colonel after 23 years and to colonel after 28 years. The number of colonels would be limited to 705. After 28 years, there could be promotion to the rank of brigadier general or to chief-of-branch. Brigadiers would have to retire at 62. Other promotion list officers would have to retire at 60 except that by action of the Secretary of War, 5% of their number might be retained until 62. Such action will bring younger officers up to the higher grades and give them opportunities to command and perform executive and staff functions.

PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITIES.

VIII. William E. Riker - Republican.

Who is William E. Riker? All we know is what he says in his magazine called the Emancipator published in Holy City, California. He was born in 1874 "followed several trades and engaged himself in various lines of business and never had any failures." He is baldish and slightly stout. In his mimeographed announcement he says, "Whether win or lose, my hat goes into the ring for President of the United States under the Republican ticket, introducing my Perfect System of Government that will positively turn our country into a paradise." He offers a reward of \$25,000 to anyone who can find a flaw in his Perfect System of Government. He has a 10 point platform which includes (1) Correctly interpreting the Constitution (2) having the government take over all banking, insurance and gambling (3) preventing the hoarding or export of money (4) government to take over all mortgages (5) enforcement of immigration restrictions and also birth control (6) government to create work for all unemployed (7) only Caucasians to have authority or be allowed to operate any business (8) security to be guaranteed to everybody (9) no imports except as to goods that cannot be produced here (10) prices and production to be fixed by representatives of government, capital, science and labor. Folks, meet William E. Riker the gentleman from California who holds the one and only key to paradise.