

May 1, 1937

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

THE GREAT COMMONER. We seldom think of William Jennings Bryan as an Illinoisan and yet he was born at Salem Illinois, attended college at Jacksonville and law school in Chicago and practiced law for four years at Jacksonville before he moved to Lincoln, Nebraska at age 27. He comes to mind at this time because of the unveiling of a statue of Bryan in the rotunda of the National Capitol on the afternoon of April 27th. Back in 1896, when the Populist sentiment crystallized around him and swept him into his first nomination for the Presidency he was defended as a man of vision and courage and denounced as a demagogue and shallow thinker. Yet, this very week as his statue is unveiled, the Congress quite unknowingly acclaimed his vision and his magnificent conception of international relationships when it finally passed a neutrality act which contains some provisions which stand as a monument to Bryan. The embargo on arms and munitions of war, the prohibition on loans to warring nations, the prohibition on travel by American citizens on belligerent ships except at the travelers risk were all proposed by Bryan before this nation entered the World War. He foresaw that these things would drag us into the conflict. He resisted them as best he knew and sacrificed his place as Secretary of State because of his convictions. Just twenty years after we declared war on Germany, we experience a vindication of Bryan's position and pay testimony to his vision. Such are the judgments of history.

BUGS, RODENTS, VERMIN. The world seems filled with bugs, rodents, vermin, pests, insects and what not to threaten man's subsistence and comfort. Uncle Sam spends millions to employ scientists to carry on the relentless struggle against these enemies of mankind. But aside from that, killing bugs and rodents has become a considerable business in itself. The pest-chasers even have a national association. They call themselves exterminators and fumigators and refer to their business as the Pest Control Industry of America. Their motto is "Don't Tolerate-Exterminate." Their business slogan is "Certified Cleanliness." But this is not an advertisement of the bugologists and pest-chasers. What we started to say was that they're a bit mad. In fact they're mad at the W.P.A. One of the things the W.P.A. has undertaken is a campaign of rodent control. Since Mr. Rat is a carrier of bubonic plague, he has been singled out for attack by the W.P.A., especially in large cities. For more than a year, 550 W. P.A. workers have conducted a house-to-house campaign of rat-control. It appears that 300 more were added to the force, making a total of 850. The Pest Control Industry has watched this W.P.A. activity with some misgivings on the ground that it is taking away their bread and butter and has sent a protest to Congress. They want no more government rat catching on the ground that it constitutes an encroachment on the private business of rat control. We hope the pesky rats will take an interest in this controversy.

MINERS, GAS, LEGISLATURE, SUPREME COURT. Any one of those items would fill several books but we propose to put them altogether in one paragraph, even tho he appears to be an astronomical feat. Back in 1929, Illinois consumed about 3 billion cubic feet of natural gas. By 1936, it has risen to the staggering total of 65 billion cubic feet. This consumption of natural gas means much to miners. Most of it is conveyed to Illinois by pipeline from southern states. A 24 inch pipeline and two 22 inch lines now enter our state bringing gas from other states. The 65 billion cubic feet consumed in 1936 is the equivalent of more than 2½ million tons of coal. It is felt that for regulatory purposes, it would be equitable to impose a tax of 5¢ per 1000 cubic feet of natural gas and to that end a bill has been introduced in both branches of the Illinois Legislature. It is therefore of more than passing moment that on April 26, 1937, the Supreme Court in the case of Southern Natural Gas Co. vs Alabama, held that a tax of \$2.00 per \$1000 of capital expended in Alabama by a corporation which was chartered in Delaware and which brought gas into Alabama by pipeline from Louisiana and Mississippi, was a valid exercise of the taxing powers of the state. It is regarded as a privilege tax and therefore valid. Illinois Lawmakers will be interested in this decision.

UNCLE SAM ACQUIRES BIT OF HEAVEN. Uncle Sam is an amazing fellow. He has such acquisitive ways. When borrowers from the RFC failed to pay their loans, the good Uncle found himself the temporary possessor of railroads, public utilities, banks, insurance companies and what not. When farmers were distressed to the point where they could not pay interest and principal on loans, Uncle Sam became a country squire

with huge holdings. When distressed urban dwellers could not meet payments on home loans, our benevolent but acquisitive Uncle soon found himself in the real estate business with many properties on hand. But this week the good Uncle outdid himself and acquired a bit of Heaven. It was such a prosaic and dull transaction. No angelic choir was there to chant for the occasion. It was not heralded by a tinkling blast on Gabriel's horn. In fact it was anything but an ethereal transaction. It seems that many months ago, the followers of Father Divine, Negro cult leader of New York, established a branch "Heaven" in a residence at 2033 Claggett Street, Washington, D.C. The Home Owners Loan Corporation had made a \$3000 loan on the property. Whether the State of affairs at this corner of "Heaven" were heavenly or un-heavenly does not appear. Perchance, the devoted followers of the new cult moved this branch of "heaven" to more heavenly surroundings. But this fact does appear - somebody forgot to pay the installments on the loan on this branch of "heaven" whereupon the very unsentimental Uncle Sam caused foreclosure to be instituted, bid the property in for \$3000 and now finds himself the possessor of a branch "heaven". Pity, the unromantic administrators of the HOLC. All that their legalistic records indicate is that the U.S. purchased at foreclosure, a residence situated at 2033 Claggett Street, Washington, D.C. SAWDUST. Back in horse and buggy days, you could go to a planing mill or saw mill and get gunny sacks full of sawdust without charge for smoking succulent ham or toothsome sausage. The old time butcher could get a wagon load to spread on the floor of the meat market. The rest was burned under the boiler from whence the mill derived steam power in operating the woodworking machinery. Time marched on. Planing mills and sawmills switched to electric power, had no place to burn sawdust. Meat markets got "arty" and went in for tile floors. Liquid smoke replaced sawdust for smoking purposes. But there was the sawdust. Few years ago, Congress appropriated some money for a Forest Products Laboratory at Madison, Wisconsin. (For the fiscal year 1938 the appropriation will be a little over \$600,000.) This laboratory began to poke around into new uses for wood, new methods etc. They came before the Committee on Agricultural Appropriations and there revealed some of their work. The sawdust pile takes on new importance. They put it in a kettle, mix it with acid, put it under pressure and the result is a powdery looking substance floating around on a syrupy liquid. The powder is skimmed off, placed in molds and squeezed into what is known as "plastic" material. It is dark in color, light in weight, hard as marble, takes a high polish, can be molded into any form, put on the turning lathe and shaped into any form. It can be turned into gorgeous looking table tops, lamp bases, knife handles, desk sets, and a thousand and one other items that tempt the eye and the pocket book of those who are intrigued with items of dainty beauty. Fancy and unslightly sawdust pile being transformed into beautiful gadgets to grace the parlors and drawing rooms of the land.

MAKERS OF LAWS, MAKERS OF SONGS. Back in Civil War days, some soldier was said to have observed that if he could write the songs of a nation, he cared not who made its laws. This week, lawmakers and a songmaker got together. George M. Cohan, dramatist, actor, and songwriter was called upon during the World War to employ his talents in producing songs that would stimulate the morale of the people and the soldiers. Perhaps his outstanding song success was "Over There." It was timely, it had rhythm. It had snap. It was easy to sing. It was a smash-hit, George Cohan sold "Over There" to Leo Feist, a music publisher for \$25,000 and turned the money over to the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and other auxiliary organizations doing patriotic duty. The war ended. "Over There" continued to be popular. Historians began to dissect the war, take it apart, examine public reactions, compile figures and peek into the mortal spirit to see what everything was all about. Somebody, with an appreciation of how much music can do for soldiers, felt that while we were handing out medals to generals, colonels, soldiers, money raisers, industrialists, statesmen and other that perhaps it would be in order to suggest a medal for the man who wrote "Over There." The medal was authorized some months ago. An estimate of the cost was made by the Budget Bureau. It was sent to Congress as an item in the Deficiency Appropriation Bill. The cost would be \$1225. Congress cut it to \$700 and passed it. Items in the cost of the medal are Sculptured Model -\$400, Die for Badge- \$112, Die for riband bar-\$20, Flat die for reverse side-\$10, 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  ounces of gold-\$113.75, Contingent expenses and ribbon- \$44.25, Total \$700. The medal will be about 3 inches in diameter and the inscription is a matter for the President to determine. After 20-years - a medal for the writer of

Over There.

GOODTIMES INCREASED DESERTIONS. It is an odd fact that a return of better times brings an increase in army desertions. When times are bad and jobs are scarce, there is smaller incentive to evade the discipline and the restrictions that are incident to a life in uniform. Improvement in conditions makes life and opportunity outside the army appear in more roseate hue and then the boys succumb to the lure of greener pastures in the distance. In the fiscal year 1933, there were 3018 desertions. For the fiscal year 1937, it is estimated that the number will reach 6000. A chart covering a long period of time indicates that it is unfailingly true that improved conditions bring more desertions. It's an obscure but rather reliable barometer.

FROM THE RECORD. Rep. David Lewis of Maryland speaking: "There is such a thing as lawyer sense that does not make common sense. In saying that, I intend no sneer at the legal profession. I am a lawyer myself. Assistant Attorney General Jackson the other day gave a good illustration of this. He said he was the head of some revenue bureau that desired to know at just what time a man's marriage changed his status for taxation purposes. The question was referred to a brilliant young lawyer in the bureau. He reported shortly. You know we have two legal maxims that we lawyers resort to. One is that the law does not regard a fraction of a day. So the day of the marriage would be out. Second, in giving notice, the day of service is not counted. So the young attorney reported on that reasoning that the effective marriage of John and Mary did not occur until a day and a night after the wedding.