

5/30/36

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

ADJOURNMENT. In a short time, the 2nd session of the 74th Congress will adjourn. It will mark the end of the second Congress of the Roosevelt administration and the 74th Congress since Washington was the President. At the end of every legislative day, a motion is made to adjourn and Congress then suspends its labors until the following day. But one day soon, a different motion to adjourn will be made. It will be a motion to adjourn sine die. That simply means to adjourn without an appointed day. There will be a great fanfare. It will doubtless happen at night. The galleries will be filled. Bags and suitcases will be packed. There will be songs and leave takings. Members will repair to their homes for the approaching campaign. And on January 3rd, 1937, the 75th Congress will convene even as other Congresses have done, to carry on where the previous Congress left off.

PRELIMINARY SURVEY. At the close of Congress, newspapers will carry rather detailed summaries of the measures that were passed. It might not be amiss however to present a preliminary survey of the more important measures at this time. The number of measures enacted will not be so great as in previous sessions but are perhaps far more important in their implications.

APPROPRIATIONS. When the session closes, Congress will have enacted 11 appropriation bills. Amounts stated are approximate because of the possibility that as they left the House, these bills were increased or decreased in the Senate. The Independent Offices bill, providing funds for the Interstate Commerce Commission, Veterans Administration, Federal Trade Commission and a host of other independent agencies which do not come within the jurisdiction of any cabinet department will carry about 950 millions; The Supplemental Deficiency Appropriation Bill providing funds for various government agencies which ran short of funds or which were given new tasks and new functions to perform will be about 60 millions. The Interior Department Bill, covering Reclamation, Irrigation, Indian Affairs, Education, Mines and Mining, Alaska, Territories and other items will aggregate about 143 millions. Appropriations for the Post Office and Treasury Department will be approximately 975 million. For the War Department, funds for non-military activities such as flood control, Panama Canal, engineering etc. will be about 200 millions; for national defense there will be provision for about 375 millions. For the Department of Agriculture, not including the cost of soil conservation, the total will reach 170 millions. The Departments of State, Justice, Commerce and Labor are all consolidated in one appropriation bill. The former embraces such items as our diplomatic service and passport divisions. The Department of Justice includes prisons, G-men and the Federal attorneys in different sections of the country. The Department of Commerce includes the Bureau of Census, the Bureau of Air Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Bureau of Standards, Bureau of Fisheries, the Patent Office and a host of others. The Department of Labor includes many agencies on child welfare, woman's welfare, labor standards, immigration and naturalization, employment services and mediation boards for labor disputes. Total for these four departments will be about 116 millions. For the Navy, including cost of new vessels, about 531 millions. For the legislative branch, 23 millions. For the District of Columbia, approximately 43 millions. And finally, the deficiency bill which is a sort of catchall, in which appropriations are made to cover new legislation, new agencies that have been created and new needs. In this bill are the items for relief, for the Tennessee Valley Authority, Social Security, emergency conservation work (CCC) and for public buildings. It is the largest of all appropriation bills and will aggregate 2½ billion dollars. These appropriations take effect on July 1st 1936. By the time they become effective, the national debt will be approximately 36 billion dollars. This is 10 billion more than the national debt at the end of the World War.

MAJOR LEGISLATIVE BILLS. To classify bills in the order of their importance is manifestly impossible. That is a matter of individual viewpoint. They are presented here in the order in which they passed the House. First came the Adjusted Compensation Payment Act. (Bonus) It provides for payment of the balance of the bonus with interest charges cancelled and will require approximately two and one fifth billions. Then came a measure to repeal the Tobacco, Cotton and Potato Acts passed in 1935. Their repeal was occasioned by the action of the Supreme Court in invalidating the AAA. Then came the Soil Conservation Act, to replace the AAA. It provides payments for diverting the use of land from cash crops such as corn, wheat, cotton, to soil enriching and soil conserving crops such as clover, soybeans and the like. Total annual cost is estimated to be about 480 million dollars. Then came the passage of the "long-short-

haul-clause repeal" bill, repealing the 4th section of the Transportation Act of 1920. Railroads, and railroad workers were vitally interested. This measure is now pending before a Senate Committee and may die. Then came a resolution to extend the neutrality act of 1935. A new neutrality measure had been prepared and extensive hearings were held, but Congress fell to wrangling over the matter with the result that the act of 1935, with some amendments was continued by resolution until Congress could give the matter further study. Then followed the Revenue or Tax Act of 1936, repealing certain existing taxes and substituting others. As originally introduced and passed in the House, it carried high taxes on undistributed corporate surpluses and was expected to yield 620 millions annually in new permanent revenues. This new revenue is required to pay the cost of the soil conservation act and the bonus. The Rural Electrification Act, sets up a ten year program for furnishing electricity and electrical facilities to the farms of the nation at a cost of approximately 350 millions. The above measures, can properly be designated as the major acts of this session.

PENDING BILLS. There are now pending, either in the House, in the Senate in the committee, or in a conference committee of both houses, a number of bills, some of which will be enacted and some of which may fall by the wayside. The Robinson-Patman, Price Discrimination Bill has already passed the Senate, will doubtless pass the House and be enacted into law unless vetoed by the President. A flood control bill, authorizing an expenditure of approximately 390 millions, a goodly share of which will be expended along the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers has already passed both houses and is now in conference. It will doubtless become a law. The Pure Food and Drugs Act is hanging in the balance.

PENDING MAJOR BILLS. Pending in the House or Senate or in a committee or in a conference committee a number of major bills. Among these are the Flood Control Bill which will doubtless become law. Many drainage districts along the Illinois and Mississippi rivers will obtain material benefits from this measure. The Robinson-Patman Price Discrimination Bill, aimed to prevent unlawful trade practices has passed both Houses and will most likely become law. The Pure Food & Drug Bill is hanging in the balance and its chances of passage are not favorable. The Merchant Marine Bill, which has had a stormy career in the Senate may also be dumped overboard. The new Guffey Coal Bill, similar to the earlier Guffey Bill with the labor provisions stricken is pending in a House Committee. Assuming that no snarls develops on other legislation which might delay adjournment, this measure may also fall by the wayside.

MINOR BILLS. This session of Congress attained the usual average on minor bills. They will probably total three or four hundred in number and deal with every conceivable phase of governmental and private activity such as the creation of new national parks, the erection of monuments to commemorate persons or events, payment of claims to persons who have been injured by governmental activities or government agents, permits to states and cities to construct bridges across navigable streams. Of an approximate 13,000 bills introduced, about 800 or 900 managed to hurdle the many obstacles in the legislative path and become law. Truly, Congress is a legislative graveyards. That fact however should be reassuring to a Democracy wherein a Congress and 48 legislatures are forever grinding out legislation.

QUIPS FROM THE RECORD. Mr. Blanton of Texas. "Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Rich) would follow Mr. Farley around awhile, he would know exactly where he is going." Mr. Rich, "I may say to the gentleman from Texas that if I followed him, I would go crazy. (Laughter)" Mr. Blanton, "By not following him, the gentleman is possibly somewhat that way already.".....Mr. May of Ky. "Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?" Mr. Mitchell of Tenn. "I will yield to the gentleman from Ky., who has the unhappy faculty so often of getting on the wrong side of every proposition. If I could get my friend right on this bill, I would love to put my arms around him and hug him because he is as baldheaded as I am." Mr. May, "The trouble with the gentleman is that he has not hugged the right person." Mr. Mitchell, "The gentleman might not have been on the scene."

TRANSITORY GLORY. When the World War broke out, Tom Hewitt was 22. He came from a good New York family. In him coursed the thrill of conflict, the desire for adventure. The United States was still at peace with the world so Tom Hewitt, joined the celebrated Franco-American flying squadron known as the LaFayette Escadrille. The exploits of this organization would fill volumes. Then the U.S. entered the conflict and Tom Hewitt joined the American Army Air Service and was wounded in action. He came back to America and took up residence in Washington. The war did things to Tom Hewitt. It killed something. He lost his grip, became a drifter. His body became prey to excesses and a day or two ago, Tom Hewitt, who once basked in his own glory, died in a Washington rooming house. His

body lay unclaimed in the District Morgue and was destined for the Potter's Field. There, only a number on the grave would indicate that it contained the body of an unclaimed person. Fortunately, comrades of Tom Hewitt learned of it in the nick of time and now the former flyer will sleep with his buddies in Arlington cemetery, where poverty means nothing, and where money cannot buy a grave. On his grave will be a new flag and a poppy for Memorial Day.

CALL KING SOLOMON. Lithuania is a small country, tucked up in a corner, just northeast of Germany. It has a population of 2,476,000. There are in this country today, according to the 1930 census, about 193,000 people who were born in Lithuania. Consequently, under the National Quota act, Lithuania is entitled to send only 100 people to the United States each year, assuming they are admissible under other provisions of law. Back in 1926, two sisters living in Lithuania, wanted to come to the United States. Unfortunately, the quota was already closed and they could secure no passport visa from the American consul. What to do? They journeyed to Berlin. There they encountered a "man" who asked where they wished to go. They said "America." He offered to get them the proper visas. It would cost about \$200. They senses no wrong in this, paid the money, were provided with visas, properly executed by the American consul. The two young ladies came to the U.S. Shortly after arrival, they met two young men. They were brothers. A courtship ensued. Love prevailed and the young men married the young ladies. They raised families. Life was pleasant. The one husband is an American citizen and sells insurance. The children are citizens because native-born. The other has a dress shop, is a citizen, employs about 10 persons. His children are also citizens. The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in the course of its check up on naturalization petitions learns how and when the young ladies came over and found that they were illegally in this country and therefore deportable. They can be deported but what about the fathers and children who are citizens, and who cannot be deported. These and similar cases are now occupying the attention of the House Immigration Committee. The wisdom of a Solomon is needed to determine the equities in many of these cases.

A \$60,000 ERROR. Fifteen or more years ago, the Federal Government through the Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection in the Dept. of Commerce collected \$60,823 from the Standard Oil Company in tonnage taxes and light moneys. Over a period of years, the Standard Oil Company protested the fees and taxes as excessive and discriminatory and finally filed suit in the Court of Claims for recovery of the amount paid. The case dragged on until two years ago when the Court decided that the taxes were legally assessed and collected. A year ago, this same claim was included in a so-called omnibus claims bill and was approved by the Secretary of Commerce. Three weeks after the Secretary's approval, the Attorney General also rendered an interpretation of the court's action under which the claim was apparently not allowable. However, the claim passed the Senate and was detected by a Rep. Cochran of Mo. Chairman of the House Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments. When he brought the matter to light, the Secretary of Commerce freely admitted his error. Uncle Sam thereby saves the \$60,000.