

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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NINETEEN NATIONAL WAR AGENCIES.

This week, Congress considered a Bill which appropriates the sum of 769 million dollars for 19 different war agencies. One paragraph in the report which the Appropriations Committee presented to the House in connection with this measure radiates a note of hope and assurance. It reads: "This Bill marks the beginning of the end of those agencies established during the war to develop and maintain the war production machine..... Many of the controls and regulatory measures which have been adopted, while imperative in fighting a total war, are foreign to the American way of life; they should be eased as rapidly as the progress of the war will permit and abolished as soon as the national security no longer requires them."

THE AGENCIES IN QUESTION.

This applies to (1) The National War Labor Board which was created to deal with strikes and labor controversies in plants doing war work. (2) The Alien Property Custodian, an office which was created to take over and administer all property in this country which belonged to aliens of enemy countries with whom we were at war. (3) Office of Defense Transportation which rations trucks and cars and undertook to keep our whole transportation system in operating order. (4) Office of Inter-American Affairs which cultivated a better relationship with the republics of South and Central America and kept them better informed of our war effort. (5) Office of Scientific Research which marshalled the scientific brains of the nation and developed many new devices. (6) Office of War Information which operated at home and abroad and carried on what is known as psychological warfare. (7) War Production Board which controlled and allocated materials so that the production of war materials might go forward without a lag. (8) Office of Smaller War Plants which cooperated with smaller plants to obtain war contracts and also the funds with which to perform their operations (9) The War Shipping Administration which took over all commercial cargo vessels, leased, sold or operated vessels, provided marine, insurance and helped keep ocean-going cargoes moving.

STILL OTHERS

(10) The Office of Censorship developed a code for the guidance of all newspapers and publications to make certain that information of value did not reach the enemy. (11) Office of Strategic Services carried on certain secret operations in conjunction with the Army. (12) The Petroleum Administration for War had the job of increasing the supply of motor fuel for planes, tanks and other devices, stimulating production and advising OPA how much gasoline was deemed available for civilian use. (13) Selective Service System had the job of providing manpower for the fighting forces. (14) War Relocation Authority was charged with the task of evacuating and detaining the Japanese who were located in the Pacific coast states. (15) Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion had certain supervisory functions and will henceforth deal with conversion to a peace time basis and the Surplus Property Board has the job of directing the disposal of billions of dollars of surplus war property of all kinds. (16) The Office of Economic Stabilization was a kind of supervisory office over the various functions relating to our domestic economy. (17) Office of Contract Settlement adjusted and re-negotiated war contracts where it appeared that profits were excessive. (18) Office of Retraining and Re-employment deals with the training and return of our manpower to useful peacetime pursuits.

THE UNMENTIONED ONE.

You'll note that one of the (19) was not mentioned. It's the Office of Civilian Defense. It is being liquidated. You will recall that it dealt with home defense and directed the various programs for black-outs, training of persons for auxiliary fire and police work if it became necessary, and other functions. It seems a little unreal and fantastic as one contemplates all this, how war has reached into our daily living. And not the least item of course is the cost. In the year which ends on June 30 (fiscal year) these agencies will have cost nearly ONE BILLION DOLLARS. Moreover, they've been operating for a number of years. Here again, in terms of the cost to the citizens of this country and in terms of dislocation of normal living, one finds added incentive for the development of a peace that will live and an organization that can make it live.