

7-1-39

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

JUNE 30TH - THE BOOK WAS CLOSED.

Write finis. The book is closed. Another fiscal year has ticked off. June 30th marked the end of the fiscal year 1939 for Uncle Sam and the account can now be rendered. That huge machine known as the Federal Government spent \$9,155,425,054.50 in the 12 months which just came to an end. That is a half billion more than was spent in 1936, the high-water mark for peace-time spending. But the good Uncle did not have that much money to spend. In fact, he collected only \$5,585,000,000 in all forms of taxes from incomes, customs, gasoline, tobacco, liquor, cosmetics, jewelry, corporations, excess profits, gifts, and what-not. Well how can you spend over nine billion when you only took in less than six billion? That's easy. You borrow it. Who from? From the people. How? You issue bonds, sell them to the people and spend the money. But those bonds have to be paid and the interest must be paid? Quite true, but that's another worry. So we've added three and one half billion to the debt as the books closed on June 30th.

INTERNATIONAL SWAPPING.

On June 24th, an agreement was negotiated between Great Britain and the United States whereby Great Britain will take 600,000 bales of cotton on which the Government now holds a loan, in return for an equivalent amount in dollars of rubber. The most interesting part of this agreement is Section 4. It reads as follows: "The intention of the United States Government and the government of the United Kingdom being to acquire reserves of cotton and rubber respectively against the contingency of a major war emergency, each government undertakes not to dispose of its stock (otherwise than for the purpose of replacing such stocks by equivalent quantities in so far as may be expedient for preventing deterioration) except in the event of such an emergency." Read that again and think. Read that again and blink. We take rubber and place it in a warehouse, much the same as we now bury gold in Kentucky. Great Britain takes cotton and places it in a warehouse. It is not to be used except in case of war. It is not removed from the market in that it continues to constitute a part of the overhanging supply. What beneficial trade effects are to be derived? Virtually none, it would seem. To what extent does it solve the cotton problem? It doesn't.

THE GHOST OF THE ARMS EMBARGO.

When the war came in 1914, the warring nations looked to the United States for arms and ammunition. Our munitions factories did enormous business. Profits were immense. But the vessels which transported arms from America to Europe were subject to torpedoing since they carried contraband of war. Moreover, vessels flying the foreign flag and transporting arms were fair game for submarines. The danger lay in the fact that American citizens were travelling on such vessels.

When Congress met in December of 1914, Senator Hitchcock of Nebraska introduced a resolution to provide for an embargo on the shipment of arms and munitions. Great Britain unofficially notified our State Department without delay that such special legislation when a war was in progress was a definitely un-neutral act. That was indeed a singular state of affairs. In trying to protect our own interests and in our effort to keep out of war by prohibiting the shipment of arms, we found that since the war was under way, such action might be interpreted to be un-neutral. The scene shifts to the Congress on June 29th, 1939. Debate on the neutrality bill is in progress. Speaker after speaker informs the House that an arms embargo would be a snare and a delusion and we should not do it. So what? Do the lessons of history mean anything?

HOW MANY EXPLOSIONS IN AN EAR OF CORN.

Punsters have talked of the number of shocks in an acre of corn but few if any have ever speculated on the number of explosions in an ear of corn. No, Gentle Reader, this is not facetiousness. Bend your ear as we relate the story. In Germany today, coal is powdered and liquified and then used as motor fuel in place of gasoline. Sounds fantastic but it's fact. This very fact has stimulated our chemists to wonder whether starch cannot be liquified or treated in some other fashion so as to explode in the chamber of an automobile engine when ignited and do the work of gasoline. Fantastic, you say? What about the frightful starch dust explosion at Pekin, Illinois many years ago? What about recurring dust explosions in soy bean mills? Congress appropriates funds every year to do research work on dust explosions in the hope of eliminating this hazard. Suppose these explosions could be controlled and made to push the piston heads down in an automobile engine. We would suddenly become deeply interested in the number of explosions in an ear of corn. Now then, is this all so airy and fanciful? The answer is that the Regional Farm Laboratory at Peoria, Illinois, under the direction of some of the outstanding chemists in the land will give thought and attention to this very problem.

MAXIMILIAN'S SON.

We are a movie-going people and most persons, young and old will go to see the movie entitled "Juarez." In that picture you will see the curly headed boy adopted by Maximilian, the Emperor of Mexico and his wife Carlotta to perpetuate the empire. When you come away from the picture, you will be inmeshed in wonderment as to what happened to the boy. The Nation's Capitol provides the answer. The boy was but two when adopted as Mexico's future emperor. He was four when Maximilian was executed by a Mexican firing squad. At age 12, he was sent to Belgium and England to be educated. At 18, he came to the United States and entered Georgetown University in Washington. At 21, he returned to Mexico. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the Mexican Army. He became embroiled in a controversy with Porfiro Diaz, the Dictator of Mexico and after 14 months in prison, was exiled. Thus Don Augustin, the real life prince, came to Washington where he taught French and Spanish and married an American girl. He died in 1925. Thus in the Capitol of the U.S. is written the rest of the story of Don Augustin de Iturbide, the real life prince of Mexico.