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THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen
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THE SHADOW OF CAPONE. The shadow of Al Capone falls athwart the bootleggers of the land (Yes, my dear, we still have bootleggers) and thereby hangs a tale. You will remember when influence of one kind and another managed to keep the Honorable Al out of the clutches of the law, the Federal Government stepped into the picture some years ago and charged Mr. Capone with having failed to pay his proper taxes to Uncle Sam even though the liquor was illicit, whereupon the aforesaid Mr. Capone became an involuntary guest of Uncle Sam at various and sundry government institutions with bars across the windows. Somehow, the bootleg gentry have never forgotten. Now, bear in mind that we still have dry spots in the land and they are not all in the dust bowl. You will find them in Georgia, Kansas and elsewhere. And in these dry spots, there are folks who can still raise a thirst and having raised a thirst, the crave the squeezings from the golden corn with which to slake it. Then too, you will find folks in these dry spots, who for a consideration, are willing to provide what is needed to slake that thirst, despite the fact that the state or locality is dry and that to purvey ardent spirits to the thirsty is in violation of state law. Oddly enough, they're not particularly afraid of the state law. What they do fear is that Uncle Sam will be on their trails if they sell liquor without first obtaining a Federal license. So they make application for a license, attach a money order and are soon obliged with a handsomely engraved license. This license they hang up in a prominent place in their speak easies and are then ready to do business. Thus you have the eye-filling spectacle of the Treasury Department making war on bootleggers on the one hand and the same Treasury Dept. issuing licenses to bootleggers on the other. How come, did you say? Because the tax law which requires a $25 license from a liquor retailer says nothing about retailers in dry states and under the law, the Federal Government is virtually constrained to issue such licenses, even to bootleggers, so long as they comply in all respects. Ain't Nature Grand!

THE GENTLE ART OF LEGAL BILKING. Roughly, there are 330,000 Indians in the United States. Of this number, about 20,000 reside apart from their tribes or in states which take care of the Indian population, leaving about 310,000 who come within the purview of Congressional legislation dealing with Indian affairs. For Indian care, Congress appropriates about $31,000,000 dollars per year. This includes provision for schools, irrigation, policing and a host of other things. In other words, Indians not only share in all general benefits for which Congress provides funds but in addition, there is appropriated about $1000 per capita per year for their special benefit. If this were the end of the matter it would not be so bad but it isn't. Clever lawyers who have made a special study of Indians and their economic status have developed bases on which Indians might file claims against the Federal Government. These claims embrace mineral rights, oil rights, timber rights and a multitude of other things and all that was necessary was to secure enabling legislation so that Congress would permit the Indians to file suit against the Federal Government. (It is a well recognized principle that a person, firm, or corporation cannot sue the Federal government without the government's consent.) Year in and year out therefore, there has been a constant barrage of bills introduced and reported which seek to confer this jurisdiction and which would cost the taxpayers untold millions if such claims went to judgment. Because of this fact, there is a constant struggle on the part of vigilant members of Congress to defeat such bills.

WHAT CONSTITUTES PERFORMANCE. The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936 provided in a general way that cash benefits should be paid to farmers for diverting their acres from the growing of cash crops such as corn, wheat, cotton and other commodities to the growing of soil enriching crops and for certain soil building practices. The sum of $440,000,000 was provided for this purpose and after the act was passed, it became necessary to set up a list of practices for which payments would be made and to classify those practices. The list includes scores of practices for which cash payments are made such as planting legumes, contour plowing, planting forest trees, mulcing fruit trees, strip cropping, fallowing, terracing, gully control, reseeding pastures and the like. On western ranger land, some old practices qualify for cash payments. Seven and one half cents per acre is paid for controlling prairie dogs, 6¢ per acre for ground squirrels, 15¢ per acre for pocket gophers, and 5¢ per acre for kangaroo rats. Rescuing land from prickly pear or cactus infestation brings from 50¢ to $2 per acre. Removing sagebrush brings only 50¢ per acre. Installing tanks in the drouth country brings $25. Developing springs or seeps is paid for at the rate of $50 per spring or seep. Keeping livestock out of the maple sugar orchards of Vermont is good for $1 per acre. Applying sand to cranberry bogs brings $7.50 per half inch of sand. It is indeed a comprehensive program.

AN OLD FRIEND RETURNS. Two years ago, it was proposed to build a canal across the northern end of Florida from the Atlantic to the Gulf in order to avoid coastal storms and save time for coastwise shipping. Without authority of Congress, $5,000,000 was expended by Executive order and the Canal project started. Then it became necessary to come to Congress for more money and for the first time, Congress had an opportunity to look the canal project over. After much investigation and debate, they refused to provide more funds and the Canal died a-borning. Somehow, somewhere, sometime during this session of Congress, things happened. No less a personage than the Chief of Army Engineers came before the House Committee on Rivers and Harbors and resurrected the Florida Canal project. Extensive hearings were held and that Committee favorably reported the project, although out of 24 members on the Committee, 9 were and are opposed to it. It is estimated that the final completion of this canal may cost up to $288,000,000 and that if a Canal with a depth of 35 feet is constructed, the annual operating and maintenance cost will be nearly $15,000,000 as against annual benefits of 8½ millions. But "somebody" wants this canal and much pressure seems to have been exerted to put it over. However, it still remains for the House and Senate to vote upon this project and its approval is much in doubt. Assuming that the final cost would be $288,000,000, that amount of money would build 96,000 homes costing $3000 each for families who are now ill-housed. It would be enough to build a $3000 home for every family in Peoria, Rockford, Springfield and Bloomington, Illinois. Is such an expenditure for a canal of doubtful value justified under the circumstances?

REMOVAL OF FEDERAL JUDGES. Section 1 of Article III of the Constitution provides that Federal Judges shall "hold their offices during good behavior." In other words, they have a life term, conditioned upon good behavior. Section 4 of Article II of the Constitution provides that the President, Vice President and all civil officers (which would include Judges) shall be removed from office by impeachment and conviction for treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors. From these two provisions is derived the general notion that Judges can be removed only by impeachment. The procedure is to file charges and if supported by the House of Representatives, impeachment is voted. The matter then goes to the Senate which acts as a trial court and renders judgment as to whether such judge should be removed from office. Twelve times in the 150 years of our national life, has the Senate sat as a Court of Impeachment. Seven of the trials concerned Federal District Judges, one trial was held upon a U.S. Senator, one on a Cabinet member, one on a President, one on an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and one on a Judge of the Commerce Court. The procedure is cumbersome and it is an open secret that on occasion when the Senate sat as a solemn tribunal of impeachment, only a handful of Senators were on hand during the trial to hear the testimony. Yet every Senator, unless cause was shown, was called upon to vote for acquittal or conviction. The matter is of such importance that for a long time, the Judiciary Committee of the House has examined the possibility of legally changing and simplifying the procedure. Pursuant to these examinations, a bill has been reported providing that in the case of Federal District Judges, the House of Representatives may upon reasonable grounds certify to the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court that such a judge is guilty of misbehavior, after which the Chief Justice shall designate a special court consisting of three judges of the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals who shall have jurisdiction to try such accused Judge. The Attorney General of the U.S. would act as prosecutor and if the Judge is found guilty, the penalty shall be removal from office. This proposal raises many interesting issues.

THE RECORD SPEAKS. Rep. Rich (R.Pa.) discussing the Inland Waterways Corporation: "It is a crime for the government to continue in business." Rep. Martin (D.Colo.) "The Inland Waterways Corporation was created under the Coolidge Administration and is a Republican baby. (laughter)" Rep. Rich: "Well, it is a sick Republican baby (laughter). I will say that I am glad the gentleman brought that out. If the Republican party is responsible for its birth, then the Democratic Party ought to have sense enough to get up and kick it out. I hope they will. (Laughter and applause)"