

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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LAST YEAR OF LEND LEASE

The year which begins on July 1, 1945 and ends on June 30, 1946 may be the last year for lend-lease. But even before it terminates, the whole story can be told. You will remember that in March of 1941, before we were in the war and before Jap bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, the nations which were fighting for their very lives were hard-pressed. Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, Norway and Denmark, Belgium and Holland, France and the Balkans, were under the Nazi heel. Stukas and bombers were giving Britain hard moments. Materials, supplies, food and munitions were badly needed. The submarines were doing an effective job. It was then that we came to the rescue with lend-lease. The Act became effective on March 11, 1941 and provided for giving aid of all kinds to those nations whose defense was deemed to be vital to our own defense. From that day on, there was a steady flow of materials and supplies which kept brave and battling nations in the conflict until the tide turned and victory crowned the allied arms.

WHERE IT WENT

About 98% of all lend-lease supplies went to the British Commonwealth of Nations (including Australia, New Zealand, and India) Russia, France and China. The remaining 2% was scattered among 40 other countries. This included countries in Latin America for strengthening their military defenses; equipping Norwegian, Dutch, Greek and Yugoslav merchant vessels and airmen; supplies for Polish and Yugoslav prisoners of war and similar items. Thus, American goods by means of lend-lease have gone to every corner of the earth to aid other nations.

THE AMOUNT INVOLVED

From the date the Act was passed in March 1941 until May 1, 1945 the total lend-lease aid extended to all nations was just about 40 billion dollars. In addition, more than 800 million dollars worth of supplies were consigned to our Commanding Generals in the field for transfer to allied forces. Thus the over-all cost of lend lease to date has been nearly 41 billion. For the next fiscal year, slightly more than 4 billion dollars worth of supplies will be provided so that the cost of the whole program will be about 45 billion. From this should be deducted about 5 billions of reverse-lend lease in the form of equipment, food and supplies made available to our armies and forces by foreign countries. Thus the net cost will be about 40 billion. This just about equals all the class A, B, C, D and E. savings and war bonds that were purchased by the American people in the last ten years.

TYPES OF GOODS INVOLVED

About 57% of the total goods transferred by Lend-lease consisted of tanks, planes, bombs and other munitions. About 8 billion consisted of machinery, chemicals, medical supplies, signal equipment, railroad and engineering equipment and machine tools. Gasoline and oil for planes, tanks and trucks accounted for another 2 billion. About 5½ billion consisted of food. The remainder consisted of services such as rental on vessels, repair and servicing of ships and war equipment.

WHO FOOTS THE BILL

Under the Act of 1941, title to all lend-lease goods remains in the United States. But the food has been consumed, the gasoline burned, planes, tanks and trucks destroyed or worn out so that the salvage will be rather small. There will be little to retrieve. Will we be reimbursed for this aid? It's not likely: Some nations can't pay. Others probably won't. In addition, it was hoped when lend-lease began that we might be repaid in other ways than with money. This re-payment could take the form of lower tariffs, trade concessions, assurances of freedom to all peoples and in other intangible values. Perhaps the one mistake that was made in the lend-lease act was that it placed no price-tag on this aid in the form of assurances that small nations would be free and unmolested with a complete right to determine their own destinies. Had this been done, there would be fewer troublous problems on the horizon today.