

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT

7-19-41

HON. EVERETT M. DIRKSEN

16th District of Illinois

- - - - -

TRIP THROUGH AN AIRPLANE FACTORY

Mr. Dirksen, Mr. Speaker, a trip through a large airplane plant is revealing. It reveals how completely the imperatives of war and defense dominate the life scheme of a vast industry. First, one encounters brilliant young executives wrestling with problems of securing the necessary materials and coordinating a huge industrial process for the production of instruments designed to kill. Next, one encounters a host of young engineers skilled in the science of flight, who sweat their agile brains to secure constant improvement in winged machines to be used for destruction. Next one encounters a huge throng of trained production supervisors fussing and stewing over each little difficulty which delays the production of these engines of destruction for a single moment. Finally, one encounters thousands upon thousands of able and alert young mechanics and assemblymen who doggedly scan blueprints and, piece by piece, give form and life to those mechanical birds that shall fly through the air with messages of death. Here in a single industrial plant one finds a farflung combination of the best executive, engineering, and mechanical skill in the world joined with an endless array of the most delicate and precise machines ever devised by human brain to produce slim, trim, speedy, and effective death birds. Suppose this vast aggregate of brain power and skill could be applied to the science of flight for peaceful rather than destructive purposes? What amazing progress we would then see in the field of air transportation.

FAITH AND INTEGRITY

Military experts come forward with a request that Congress change the provisions of the Draft Act so that the inductees might be kept longer than a year. Two reasons are assigned. The first is that the situation demands that they be retained. The second is that they first begin to take on real value as soldiers after the first year of training. Nobody quarrels with this reasoning. But other profound and important facts cannot be ignored. During the first week of September 1940 when the Draft Act was under debate in Congress, its enactment was quite doubtful. There were hours and hours of debate. Time after time it was emphasized that the service would only be for 1 year. Time after time it was pointed out that 1 year would not materially disrupt the life of a college student, a young professional man, a young man preparing to marry or other groups that would be affected by the draft. This time limit of 1 year proved genuinely persuasive in securing passage of the act. To extend that time now that thousands are in the service seems like a breach of faith not only with the young men but as between the prime movers for the draft and those Members of the National Legislature who voted for its adoption because it was only for a year. Can anything better destroy the usefulness and morale of a soldier than to diminish his faith in the integrity of the Government which he is expected to defend?

DAKAR IS EVEN CLOSER

This significant phrase appears in the President's message on the occupation of Iceland by the Navy. He said the United States cannot permit the occupation "of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as air/naval bases for eventual attack against the Western Hemisphere." Iceland, on the twenty-third meridian of west longitude, is 2,600 miles from New York. Dakar, on the western tip of Africa, on the seventeenth meridian of west longitude, is 1,600 miles from Brazil. Logic dictates that the Commander in Chief may next undertake the occupation of Dakar in the light of his Icelandic message.

PRIVATE AID TO FOREIGN LANDS

Between September 6, 1939, and May 31, 1941, 338 organizations have reported to the State Department as provided by law their activities in soliciting and disbursing relief to belligerent countries. One organization, known as the Union for the Protection of the Human Person, collected nothing and expended nothing. In terms of results, the most effective group was the Greek War Relief Association, which collected nearly \$5,000,000 and expended only 5 percent of that amount in administrative publicity and campaign costs. Total amount collected by all organizations was \$36,716,273.50, of which \$3,701,882.30 was disbursed for collection and publicity expenses.

BLONDES FOR DEFENSE

Weather is enemy No. 1 for aviation. This is true of military as well as civil aviation. Hence plane pilots must be constantly advised of weather conditions. Weather is observed and charted by the United States Weather Bureau and then transmitted by teletype to all sections of the land. The devices used in determining certain basic weather conditions are extremely delicate. Some of them are so devised as to determine certain conditions such as humidity by the contraction of a hair. Oddly enough, it must be a blonde hair. Brunette hair will not serve the purpose. When the need arose recently for blonde hair, Uncle Sam advertised for it. There was a deluge of telephone calls from blondes to the War Department offering their silvery, silken tresses for defense. But shucks! It requires hair at least 22 inches long and most of the patriotic blondes had bobbed hair. Such are the worries of defense.