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THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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16th District

ALUMINUM AND DEFENSE.

Many decades ago, when the Washington Monument was completed, it was decided to crown the point with a pyramid of white metal which was practically unknown. It could be made only in a chemical laboratory and the price was almost prohibitive. Since that time, it has become so common and so comparatively cheap that kitchen utensils, auto and airplane motors, and a thousand other uses attest its utility and reasonable price. In no other field is aluminum so important as in the field of national defense, particularly in the manufacture of airplane motors. It is estimated that a large bombing-type plane requires 5 tons of aluminum castings. Aluminum is extracted by electrolytic methods from a species of clay known as bauxite. Except for small deposits of bauxite in Alabama and Georgia, virtually all commercial bauxite is found in Arkansas. Our domestic production of this clay is about 400,000 tons annually. This is but part of the story. Most of the bauxite which we use is imported from Dutch Guiana and British Guiana along the northern coast of South America. In 1939, imports as reported by the Department of Commerce reached 520,000 tons. We therefore have an interest in preserving this supply because of its importance to industry generally and to our defensive needs.

781 745 000 BUNDLES OF FLUFF.

The Poultry Section of the Division of Marketing in the Department of Agriculture makes it a business to know everything there is to be known about the chicken business. It delves into the history of chickens and chicken production. Its chick hatchery survey is interesting because it indicates the enormous size of this business. The first commercial baby-chick hatchery was established in Boston in 1873. Today there are 10,533 such hatcheries in the nation of which more than 540 are located in Illinois. Estimated production in 1938 was 781 745 000 baby chicks. If every one of these had grown to broiler size, it would have meant about 6 toothsome, succulent chickens for every man, woman and child in the country. It was also discovered that about 68 out of every 100 eggs were hatched as against 64 in the year 1934. Translated in terms of dollars and cents, this means that improved hatching at an average rate of 9¢ per chick meant nearly \$4½ million dollars greater income for the hatcheries. Part of the routine of many hatcheries now is to determine the sex of day-old chicks and separate them. While the art of sex-determination was practiced by the Chinese centuries ago, it is only in the last ten years that this practice has come into prominence in this country.

A PLATFORM GOES INTO ACTION.

One of the national 1940 political platforms provides for suffrage for the District of Columbia and thereby hangs a tale. When the national conventions were over, Washington D. C. newspapers and organizations immediately called attention to the age-old fact that residents of the nation's capital do not have a right to vote in national elections or any other election and that Congress should attend the matter at once. A campaign got under way immediately to bring about action on one or more of the many bills which have been pending before the committees of Congress to provide people of Washington with a vote. All this of course results from the fact that the Constitution of the U. S. confers exclusive legislative power over the District of Columbia on Congress on the theory that the national government should at all times have exclusive power over the place where the seat of government was located.

Opinion among the people of Washington itself is somewhat divided on the question of whether they would like to have the right to vote. Those who work in the capital and live in Maryland or Virginia can vote. Those who work in Washington and live in other states usually vote by absentee ballot. The residue, namely the residents of the District of Columbia itself are therefore voteless. There is an opinion that local suffrage and certain local control could be delegated to the District of Columbia by a simple enactment of Congress. As to giving the District of Columbia the right to have representation in Congress, it would doubtless require an amendment to the Constitution.

SOUR FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

Two plans have been advanced in recent weeks to assist South American countries whereby to protect our foreign trade with them and prevent European countries from securing undue trade advantages. One was the so-called cartel plan whereby a huge, heavily-capitalized government corporation would be set up to take over and distribute south American products, especially such items as coffee from Brazil, nitrates from Chili, bananas from Honduras and other items which easily accumulate surpluses. The second is the proposal to expand the capitalization of the Export-Import Bank of The United States and then make loans to South American and Latin American countries to keep such surpluses off of the market until conditions improve. The purpose would be to make it unnecessary for such nations to enter into barter arrangements with European nations, thereby diminishing the volume of our trade and shrinking south American markets for goods produced in the United States. The surplus commodities would be the security for our loans and if the loan were not repaid or if the surplus problem became more aggravated as production increased, it would mean that the Export-Import Bank would have to throw bananas, dried beef, nitrates, copper, coffee and other items on the market in order to secure it's money. All this directs attention to the fact that we already have some sour investments in South and Latin America. A study conducted by the Brookings Institution indicates that as of January 1, 1936, out of total loans of \$1,214,079,000 to Mexico, Cuba, and the South American countries, about 77% of these loans, amounting to \$938,256,000 were in default, as to interest. Generally speaking therefore, it would appear that there is nearly a billion dollars worth of American investments in South Americas that are a bit sour. Many of the bonds covering these loans were sold to the American people and it is to be presumed that many of them are still holding this paper.

THE RIGHT OF PETITION.

The Constitution of the United States was adopted in 1789. Some of the leaders were a bit dissatisfied with the absence of adequate guarantees of individual rights and on September 25, 1789, thru the first Congress, submitted 10 amendments which are today known as the Bill of Rights. The very first of these provides that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." That was ratified nearly 150 years ago. On July 25, 1940, Senator Van Denberg of Michigan laid before the Senate, a petition bearing 1,000,000 names urging the Congress to outlaw Fascism, Communism and Nazism and to keep America out of foreign wars. Thus does the work of the founding fathers still live and find practical use by the citizens.