

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT  
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16th District

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YES, WE HAVE NO POTATOES. Every year, there is planted in the U. S. something over 3 million acres of potatoes, yielding more than 100 bushels per acre so that total production will run about 350 million bushels annually. Illinois is not essentially a potato state because we plant but 50,000 acres annually with a yield of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 million bushels. (In 1933 however, this was reduced to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million.) Prices have been too low to suit the potato growers in the 18 major potato producing states and as a result there is before Congress now, the Potato Act of 1935, declaring all species of *Solanum tuberosum* (high-tone name for Irish potatoes) a basic commodity and providing for a tax on the first sale of potatoes and for a reduction in the production of potatoes through an allotment system. Give ear then, ye enthusiastic tuber raisers as to what the Potato Act seeks to do. First, the states will be classified as to whether they produce early potatoes, late potatoes, potatoes that are neither late or early, and late potatoes in surplus quantities. Total amount of tubers to be grown will then be determined and allotments made to different states. Three hundred pounds (5 bushels) will be exempt. On all over that, the grower must receive an allotment. Thrifty wives and husbands who till the backyard and raise more than that will thus find themselves doing business directly with Uncle Sam. If passed, the Act will become effective on December 1, 1935 and whether it shall be continued in the following year will require a vote of more than two-thirds of all the potato growers. They will be permitted one vote for each bushel produced. Growers of small amounts of potatoes to be sold at the corner grocery or to be swapped for overalls and tobacco will find themselves voting their potatoes. To finance the potato plan, a tax of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of 1¢ per pound will be imposed on the first sale of all potatoes harvested after Dec. 1, 1935. That means 45¢ a bushel. The cost of the toothsome spud will therefore go up in price by substantially that amount. To collect the tax, stamps must be affixed to the potato containers. These stamps will be obtained from the Post Office or the Collector of Internal Revenue. To make collection easier and prevent "potato bootlegging" potatoes will have to be marketed in closed, marked containers. That means baskets which comply with the regulations of the Department of Agriculture. By that time, the man who has just a few bushels of potatoes to sell will decide that it's too much trouble and eat the potatoes himself.

OLD AGE. Most recent available figures on old age for the purpose of old age pensions, indicates that there are about 7,200,000 persons in the U. S. over 65, of whom, about 2,400,000 are dependent on public or private charity or on relatives for support. Two interesting forces which are operating to complicate the problem of age in the next forty years are disclosed by a special study of this question; the first is that people live longer than in previous generations and the second is that there has been a progressive decline in the excess of births over deaths. In 1870, we had but 1 million people over 65; in 1900 there were 4 million; in 1935 the estimate is 7,200,000 and in 1975, statistical experts estimate that there will be 20,000,000. Twenty years ago, the excess of births over deaths was about 11 per hundred thousand of population. This has dropped to 6 and in the next 40 or 50 years, experts again estimate that it will balance so that our population will remain more or less stationary when it reaches 150,000,000. If and when this ever happens, it will greatly aggravate our national problems.

HOW MUCH AM I BID. Perched high above the street level in the 3400 block on 19th Street in Washington, is a steep little frame house. It is empty. Last winter it was occupied by a father, mother and 7 children on relief who tried to pay \$45 per month rent but finally gave up in despair. In December of 1933, the HOLC made a loan of \$7400 on this property. A Mrs. Thomas who owns the house could not meet the monthly payments. On Monday, four men drove up in front, got out, looked at the house, looked at each other. One of them extracted and read a paper stating

that judgment had been taken by the HOLC and that the house would be sold. Another, an auctioneer, with little enthusiasm, began his task. "How much am I bid for this fine little cottage in a select neighborhood? How much am I bid?" It was hot. It was extremely hot. Finally another member of the group spoke up. It was Mr. Jacobs of the HOLC. "Six thousand dollars" he drawled. "\$5000 once" intoned the auctioneer. "\$6000 twice, \$6000 - who'll raise it? Are you all done? Sold to the HOLC for \$6000." A few wide eyed children listened uncomprehendingly for a moment and resumed their play on the sidewalk. Just another foreclosure tragedy. The HOLC will wait 60 days to give the owner and opportunity to redeem and after that, will recondition the place, and then rent or sell it. To do that requires a special division of the HOLC. There has been set up therefore, a division of the HOLC which is called the Property Management Corporation.

NATIONAL INCOME is a general term used to cover the income of every man, woman and child from all sources, whether it be from salaries, wages, rents, pensions, dividends and what not. Out of that income, we as individuals spend for food, clothes, autos, recreation and also allot a portion to savings. These savings in turn find their way into business expansion and bring about prosperity. When national income is high, we eat better, dress better, build new houses, buy things that we do not really need, buy life insurance and throw a portion into savings. When national income is low, we skip meals, wear last year's hats, make the old family chariot last an extra year or two, borrow on our insurance policies, and save little or nothing. If that is the case, what is our national income and what was it in other years. Here are the figures together with the proportion of national income that came exclusively from wages, salaries and pensions:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total national income</u>	<u>Income from wages, salaries, etc.</u>
1900	19 billion	9½ billion
1910	32½ "	16 "
1920	75 "	43 "
1929	92 "	53 "
1930	75½ "	45 "
1931	63 "	42 "
1932	50 "	28 "
1933	47 "	27 "
1934	53 "	29 "

Note the drop in national income from 1929 to 1933. Note also the drop in wages and salaries. Meaning which? That much less to spend for food, clothes, movies, autos, furniture. That in turn means that many less jobs. That in turn means that much more relief. That in turn means higher taxes. That in turn is a damper on business enterprise which in turn means a kind of perpetuation of the depression.

WHAT, MORE JUDGES. Fifteen years ago, when Prohibition cases began to clutter the dockets of Federal Courts, Congress provided about fifteen temporary Federal Judgeships in different states to handle the extra business. When Judges holding such temporary positions died or resigned, additional legislation by Congress was required to fill the vacancy. Accordingly when District Judge Lowell of Mass. died, a bill was introduced to fill the vacancy. The measure passed the House and went to the Senate. The Senate promptly amended the bill to make permanent, the temporary judgeships that had been created in different states. When the bill returned to the House in the form of a report, agreeing to the Senate amendment, a lively debate ensued. Some House members were a bit surfeited with efforts of the Senate to amend a House bill to the point where it could not be recognized by it's original sponsor and made it an issue. Result: by a vote of 180 to 120 the report was adopted and the judgeships become permanent. Estimated cost of each judgeship per year for salary, expenses, clerical hire, etc. is about \$70,000.

BLIND BUT USEFUL. Senator Gore of Oklahoma has been blind since age 11. He lost one eye at 8 when a stick struck him. Three years later, he bought a bow and arrow for a younger brother as a birthday gift. While playing with it, the arrow pierced and destroyed the other eye. He studied law, was admitted to the bar, and in 1907 came to the Senate where, with the exception of the years from 1921 to 1930, he has remained ever since. He has an amazing memory. His wife is his constant companion and reads to him by the hour. Senator Schall of Minn. has been blind for 26 years. In 1908, he entered a cigar store, bought a cigar and started to light it on an electric lighter. The lighter was operated by a small battery but when the battery went dead, a careless clerk hitched it to the 220 volt city current. The resulting explosion blinded Senator Schall. He continued his law practice, has spent 5 terms in the House and is on his second term in the Senate. A faithful shepherd dog with an uncanny instinct guided him about Washington for years. In 1933 while attending the funeral of Senator Walsh in Montana, he had to leave the dog behind. His master gone, the dog refused to eat or drink and died in the Senator's absence. Congressman Dunn of Pa. lost the sight of one eye by an accident at age 12, and the sight of the other at age 20 while engaged in a wrestling match. He still conducts a newspaper business, an insurance business and has served in the Pa. legislature and is on his second term in Congress.