

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT  
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen  
16th Ill. District

8/16/41

BREACH OF FAITH?

Suppose that in those warm days of early September 1940, when the original draft bill was being debated in the House of Representatives, the people of the nation and the young men particularly had known that there was a likelihood that they would be retained in service after the first 12 months, would the measure have been enacted? It is reasonably certain that it would not. Those who urge and favor an extension however insist that the country was fully aware of the provision that they might be retained in service if Congress declared it in the interest of national defense. That in turn raises the question of how and from what source, the public formed it's impressions of the original Selective Service Act. First, let us mention the debates. Instances can be multiplied from the debates of last year to show that emphasis was placed on the one-year provision and little said about the proviso under which the men might be retained for longer service. Secondly there are the newspaper reports. Evidence was offered that Associated Press and Time Magazine in a summary of the bill fully acquainted the country with the proviso under which service might be longer than 12 months. An examination of dates however discloses that these summaries did not reach the public until after the measure had been approved. Most persuasive of all perhaps is the Gallup Poll. It is widely read, is concise, and and definitely serves to create impressions in the public mind. An examination discloses that in December of 1938, October 1939, June 2, 1940, June 23, 1940, July 9, 1940, July 28, 1940, and August 11th 1940, the Gallup Poll question was "Do you think every able-bodied young man 20 years old should be made to serve in the Army or Navy for one year? Note that it mentioned one year and that last poll was taken about three weeks before Congress voted on conscription. On August 11, 1940, another Gallup Poll question was "Do you favor increasing the size of our Army and Navy by drafting men between the ages of 18 and 32 to serve in the armed forces for one year?" Once more, note that this poll says one year. On August 29, 1940, just a week before Congress voted, the poll question was: "If the draft law is passed, will you personally have any objection to spending a year in some branch of military service." Once more note that it said one year. What impression did this convey?

HAND OVER TO UNCLE SAM

Luminous mountains of aluminum from the kitchens and pantries of the United States stand in mute but eloquent testimony to the willing and cooperative spirit of American citizens when government calls on them to yield materials in the interest of national defense. There is every reason to believe that American business and industry, made up of the same people who surrendered their aluminum will surrender their machines and materials if the need is shown but government does not think so. Thus, a bill was introduced in Congress to authorize the government to requisition property. War Department officials who came before Congressional Committees to urge this legislation pointed out that machines, materials, patents and airplanes might have to be requisitioned. The only weakness in their case was that all private airplanes with any military usefulness have virtually all been taken over, that patents and patent rights in the hands of unfriendly

foreigners can already be taken under a law enacted in 1910, and that raw materials of value are already on the priority list. The only thing left in their case was machines, and with respect to them, they had no inventory to indicate what these machines were or where they were. On this thin basis, Congress passed a broad requisitioning statute which delegates enormous powers to the Chief Executive.

#### DISTURBING SITUATION

There are 210,000 industrial plants in the U.S. of this total, 145,000 are classified in the category of "small business." They employ 16,250,000 persons. The continued operation of these small businesses are vital not only to the employees employed therein but to lawyers, doctors, engineers, advertising men, consultants and a host of other professions whose livelihood depends upon such business. Now comes government to impose priorities on steel, iron, aluminum, rubber, tin, copper, brass and a host of other materials which are regarded as indispensable to national defense. What shall these small businesses do for materials if they are now manufacturing goods and commodities that are not used in defense such as electrical equipment, washing machines and similar items. A recent survey of small business indicates that 64% of those polled have indicated that they must go out of business unless they can procure defense contracts. Members of Congress and officials of the Executive agencies are now meeting with delegations of small business men in the hope of meeting this very disturbing problem.

#### UNCLE SAM, MOVIE MAGNATE

Government deals in but one commodity. That is service to the people. Some times, as it undertakes a new service, government deems it necessary to sell the idea to the people. In other years this was done by the written word in the form of press releases and pamphlets and by the spoken word over the radio. Little by little, government has ventured into another medium of information. It is the movie. It has eye appeal and conveys a message. In the fiscal years 1940 and 1941, the executive agencies will spend \$3,895,000 for movies. This will provide when all expended for 1464 reels and 23,877 copies. Some are silent and some equipped with sound. A large number of agencies now use movies to sell their service and their ideas to the public. The Army and Navy are using movie shorts for instruction purposes. Titles are almost as intriguing as the thrillers which issue out of Hollywood. Some of them are Plows, Planes and Peace, Democracy. In Action, Green Acres, Dangerous Dusts, Trumpeter Swan, Day at the Zoo, Trees To Tame The Wind, Germ Quiz and a host of others. Thus Uncle Sam gradually becomes a movie magnate.