

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT  
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GEE AND HAW

For many days, Mr. Leon Henderson, Administrator of the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply (commonly referred to as OPACS) has been testifying before the House Banking and Currency Committee in behalf of a bill to confer authority upon the President to place ceilings upon prices and place a limit upon rents. It is one of the most all-inclusive measures ever proposed to the Congress and carries with it the power of complete control over our economic system. The idea, of course, is to head off inflation. While this measure was being discussed, the Senate was busy writing amendments into a bill passed by the House whereby cotton and wheat now in storage under loan would be frozen for the period of the war and thereafter until the Congress should release these commodities. They could be withdrawn only for relief, national defense or exchange purposes. The announced purpose of this proposal was to increase the price of these commodities. Thus, while one branch of government seeks power to curb price rises, another branch provides legislation to increase prices. All of which is a bit of gee-ing and hawing.

THE IRREPRESSIBLE DITCH

Several years ago, the President approved and the War Department Engineers endorsed a proposal to construct a canal across the northern portion of Florida to shorten the route between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, the canal began as a WPA project and about five million dollars was expended on preliminary construction. Thereupon the United States Senate took the matter in hand and literally blew the canal out of the water. Other attempts were made to revive the canal but every attempt failed. Now comes a bill to authorize the improvement of rivers and harbors and after the Committee had finished it's labors, it included the St. Lawrence Waterway and also the Florida Ship Canal. Thus the irrepressible ditch bobs up once more and will be defended on the ground of national defense. How much will it cost? It is estimated at about 97 millions. There is still a good prospect that Congress will either blow this ditch out of the water or will blow the water out of the ditch.

THE GENTLE ART OF BOOTLEGGING

Notwithstanding the fact that there are 127 registered distilleries in the country and that there are 485,000,000 gallons of spirits in warehouses, the gentle or not-so-gentle art of bootlegging continues to thrive. In the fiscal year 1940, the Treasury Department siezed 10,663 stills and about 6½ million gallons of mash. It is rather interesting to note that about 82% of all stills siezed came from 14 southern states where the traditions of mountain dew and the fragrance of the julep still persist. The new tax bill, now pending before the Senate increases the tax on spirits by \$1 per gallon making the total Federal Tax \$4 per gallon. It is frankly expected that increased taxes on spirits will stimulate bootlegging and that additional enforcement personnel will be required to meet this problem. Thus the bitter fruit of prohibition is still with us.

## COTTON HOSE

Several years ago, Dr. Louise Stanley, Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics in the Department of Agriculture and Miss Ruth O'Brien, Chief of the Textiles and Clothing Division of the Bureau appeared before a Committee of Congress and recited their efforts to make American women cotton-stockings-conscious. It was something of an uphill job. It was difficult to persuade the fair sex that the joy and pride of silk-encased legs should submit to a kind of economic patriotism so that we might use more surplus cotton. It was equally difficult to convince manufacturers to pioneer in the field of cotton hose. **But** the patient ladies in the Bureau stuck to their task. Not **only** did they have to contend with silk and rayon but with nylon as well. They worked on durability. They worked on attractive designs. They worked on new chemical finishes for cotton hose. But so long as anywhere from 200,000 to 350,000 bales of silk continued to flow to the U.S. from Japan, every year, persuading the ladies of our land that a calf-in-cotton was as attractive as a calf-in-silk made little real progress. Then came the war. Then came the imposition of priorities on silk. Then came the problem of supplying an adequate number of pairs of hose for the ladies. Thus under the impetus of war and diplomacy, Dr. Stanley and Miss O'Brien may suddenly find an ally in selling to American women the new designs in cotton hose. About 1 1/3 billion pairs of hose of all kinds are produced in the U.S. annually.