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THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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Strictly speaking, the House of Representatives, has never had a direct hand in the foreign affairs of this country. That springs from the fact that our relations with other countries have been handled by executive agreements or treaties and such treaties, as provided by the Constitution must come before the Senate for ratification. Moreover, the Senate has always been and still is jealous of this power and has generally rebuffed any attempt on the part of any other branch or agency of the government to share this authority. But in this day and age, when treaties and agreements are likely to carry with them, commitments for expenditures of money from the U S Treasury, the House could easily nullify any treaty by refusing to vote money to make it effective. Moreover, the billions of dollars of lease-lend funds were made possible only after the House along with the Senate, enacted the lease-lend bill to aid other nations and then voted the money to carry out the provisions of that Act. Thus it was but natural that the House should have a growing interest in foreign affairs and felt impelled to express itself on this subject. For several weeks, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House, considered the matter of a resolution which expressed the sense of Congress on collaborating with other nations after the victory was won and out of those deliberations, there came the so-called Fulbright Resolution, named after Rep. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, a very able member of the House who was a Rhodes scholar, who once served as an attorney in the Department of Justice and who served as President of the University of Arkansas.

THE RESOLUTION.

The resolution itself contains but a single paragraph and reads as follows "That the Congress hereby express itself as favoring the creation of appropriate international machinery with power adequate to establish and to maintain just and lasting peace among the nations of the world and as favoring participation by the United States therein through its constitutional processes." This resolution was the combined product of members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and was reduced to final form on June 15, 1943. It was then reported to the House for action.

THE PROCEDURE FOR ITS CONSIDERATION

Before Congress recessed in July, there was an intimation that it might be considered by the House but nothing was done until Congress returned to its labors on September 14th. It was then determined to bring it up under a mode of procedure known as a "suspension of the rules." This procedure is normally employed when speedy action on some vitally important matter is necessary. But as Speaker Longworth once observed in making a ruling on this procedure, "It is not a normal legislative procedure. It is a trifle unfair in that it limits debate and does not permit the right of amendment." In fact, under this procedure, there can be but 40 minutes of debate, equally divided by those for and those against the proposal and there is no right or opportunity to offer any amendments. This is the method which was proposed under which to consider this very important matter and when protests began, it was decided to stick by the procedure but to permit four hours of debate. The debate began on Monday September 20th and ended on Tuesday the 21st. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 360 to 29 with 40 members not voting and one member voting present.

WHAT DOES IT DO,

On that question there is wide divergence of opinion. An examination of the speeches made, especially by members of the Committee which brought in the resolution, indicates that it is only an expression of opinion that it commits us to nothing, that it binds us to nothing, that it delegates no power to the President, that anybody could vote for it, that it implies an international police force, that it does not provide for an international police force, that it calls for world government, that it is but a first step, that it is a full commitment that it barter away our sovereignty, that it nullifies the constitution, that it does not nullify the constitution, etc. It is indeed amazing what a single paragraph of 45 words can mean to the different members of Congress.

SOME QUERIES.

The author of the Congressional Front raised these queries in connection with this action. Why such haste in jamming this resolution through? Why only four hours of debate on the most important matter before the American people? Why such general language, on the meaning of which there is so much difference of opinion? Why not specific language which makes the intent of Congress clear? Why not more specific language on the use of force to curb military aggression? Why not more specific language to indicate the intention of creating an agency for the application of justice to international disputes? Why not specific language on the disarmament of Axis powers? Why not specific language on the maintenance of a strong Army and Navy of the United States? Why not a clarification of peace aims now so that the peacemakers will not become the prisoners of public opinion later?