

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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WAR STIMULATES INGENUITY.

There may be as many as 250,000 rivets in a single bombing plane. These are snugly fastened with an airhammer from one side and a "bucker" from the other. Thousands of them are in tight places, difficult to reach. Yet each is important. Riveting in such tight places slows down the work materially. This fact challenged the technicians and engineers. Research began. The result was the invention of an explosive rivet. The explosive charge in the rivet is set off by the application of heat and so it fastens itself with a precision that approaches one one-twenty thousandth of an inch. Such is the stimulus of necessity born of war.

DO YOU REMEMBER -

these interesting items from the last world war. On May 11, 1918, May wheat sold on the Chicago Board of Trade for \$3.25 per bushel. On June 19, 1918 cotton reached 27¢ a pound. On July 27, 1918, the Secretary of the Treasury advised Congress that the first year of war would cost the nation 11 2/3 billion dollars. (Compare with more than 67 billion for this fiscal year.) On September 20, 1918 copper prices were fixed at 23 1/2¢ per pound. On October 25, 1918 the N. Y. City Food Administrator urged two meatless and two wheatless days each week. On December 14, 1918, the Federal Fuel Administrator ordered electric signs darkened on Thursdays and Sundays. On December 31, 1918, the N. Y. Fuel Administrator ordered six lightless nights each week and permitted lights only on Saturday night.

NEW CONSTRUCTION PROSPECTS.

The Nation's total lumber production in 1941 was 32 billion board feet. This year's requirements will be 38 billion board feet. This enormous increase is the result of war demands. The net result is a lumber shortage which stimulates new ideas for lumber conservation. It also develops a trend toward masonry construction. The National Homes Foundation has designed a house in which brick and tile predomates which requires but half as much lumber and 60% fewer nails than a framed dwelling and costs but \$236 more. Such is the impact of war needs on building prospects.

THE PARITY CONTROVERSY.

In 1933 when Congress declared it to be national policy that farmers should receive a price for farm products which would place them in a position comparable with the buying power which they enjoyed in the period from 1909 to 1914, the parity formula did not include interest and taxes. In 1935, the law was amended so that in computing the parity formula, differences in interest and taxes paid compared with 1909-1914 would be included. At no time did the formula include labor costs. The controversy which waxed so hot in Washington was concerned with including such costs. There were three approaches to the problem. One proposal would include all labor costs including a rate of pay for each member of a farmers family. Another proposal would include only hired labor. A third proposal would leave it to the President to determine what additional costs should be included. In the 1910-1914 period the national average for farm wages was \$22.09 per month with board. In July 1942 it was \$47.29. This is the average. Some sections were lower. Some were much higher. Testimony indicates that in some areas, hired farm labor commands as much as \$200 per month without board. The controversy ranged about the proposal to equalize this

difference in costs.

THE QUIT RATE.

There are many reasons why Government workers quit their jobs or seek transfers. Perhaps they can do better elsewhere. Perhaps another job is more congenial. Perhaps they don't like the boss. Perhaps living costs are too high. Perhaps they like to work and live closer to their native homes. In any event, the quit rate and demands for transfers by Federal workers has become a genuine problem particularly in Washington where rents and food are high, where housing is inadequate and where transportation to and from work often causes inconvenience and discomfort. To meet this situation, the Civil Service Commission was directed by the War Manpower Commission to take complete charge of the problem of transfers of the 2,300,000 civilian workers in the Executive Departments of government and to order them transferred or to withhold transfers on the basis of where they can best aid the war effort. Such transfers can be made without the consent of the employee. In other words, Uncle Sam, his boss, can now order an employee to work in any part of the Government shop.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

On October 30, 1941 the crew of the Reuben James, which was torpedoed in the Atlantic, climbed to the deck of the Destroyer Niblack where the crew generously provided shoes, clothing and blankets to give them warmth and strength. It was perhaps natural that the boys on the torpedoed vessel should fail to return some of these items and in consequence fifteen members of the Destroyer's crew filed a claim with the Navy on proper forms for return or reimbursement on these items of clothing having noted on the form that the items had been given to survivors. Six months later the Navy authorities who had the matter under consideration requested a ruling from the Comptroller General as to whether current Navy funds were available for purpose of making reimbursement. The Comptroller's office considered the matter for four months and then rendered a four page opinion stating that funds were not available for this purpose. Thus a year has elapsed and the generous hearted sailors on the Destroyer Niblack are still waiting disposition of their lost claim.