

10-27-45

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

-----

FOR SALE.

Want to buy something? Want to buy anything? Step right up to the counter. Your Uncle Sam can show you the greatest and most complete line in all the world. How about a fine twin-engine bomber? Just like new! And guaranteed not to take more than a year's salary to buy gasoline for one month of operation. Or, maybe you might be interested in some homing pigeons. Well, here's a bargain. Great for sending messages from your office to your home and back. Only \$25 for 5 pairs of these fine birds. What about a little bargain lot of 124,000 ice bags? Or 884,000 spark plugs? Those would keep you supplied for quite awhile. Maybe 194,000 pairs of goggles is your dish. No? Well, what about 129,000 reams of typewriter paper or 21,000 pounds of saddle soap? Now that winter is coming, what about a nice bargain lot of 51 snow plows? Okay, mister! Drop around anytime. Whatever it is that you want, we have it.

INVENTORY.

And that's quite right. Uncle Sam has it. When most of the goods have been declared surplus, Uncle Sam will have warehouses, and shelves bursting with goods. In fact, the face value of his stock in trade will be about 27 billion dollars. And he is encountering trouble in selling it. To date, about 700 million dollars worth of goods and equipment of all kinds has been disposed. It's a mere drop in the bucket. So, Uncle Sam is waiting for customers to come in and buy. One of the real difficulties and sources of delay has been the Surplus Property Administration itself. Already it has chalked up a checkered bit of

HISTORY.

The business of disposing of the surplus goods accumulated as a result of war purchases began as far back as February of 1944 when President Roosevelt appointed a Surplus Property Administrator. Nine months later, Congress passed a Surplus Property Act which provided for a 3-man Board to administer this big selling job. That did not work too well and in September of this year, the Board was abolished and a single administrator was appointed. He happens to be W. Stuart Symington of St. Louis. He is a former banker. He has a very simple philosophy, as he himself expressed it to the Appropriations Committee of the House and that is to "sell this surplus as rapidly as possible for the most money."

ANOTHER CHANGE.

Now comes another change in this surplus set-up. By Presidential order, a new War Assets Corporation has been created. It will take over the selling job heretofore handled by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Department of Commerce. That means that the War Assets Corporation will handle the merchandising of about 90% of all the property which is declared surplus by the Army, Navy, and other agencies of government. Branches, warehouses and sales rooms have already been established in every part of the country and the only thing that Uncle Sam really needs now is customers.

SELLING COSTS.

Incidentally, it costs Uncle Sam a very considerable sum in the form of selling expenses. For the present fiscal year which ends next June, the Surplus Property Administration estimates that it's expenses including those of the government agencies which actually do the selling job will be about 266 million dollars. To justify that kind of sales overhead means that a lot of property must be sold in a short space of time. So folks, Uncle Sam will be happy to see you step up to the counter. And if you want to buy 1,482,000 rubber heels or 45 periscopes or 8285 blue wool sweaters such as nurses wear, or 1,696,000 square yards of mosquito netting, Uncle Sam has it.