

IF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT SHOULD FAIL TO TAKE OFFICE.

Presidential elections are held in November. The person elected to the Presidency takes office on the 20th of January following the election. There is, therefore, a period of two and one half months between election and inauguration. What would happen if the person elected to the Presidency should die or be disqualified before he actually took office? Oddly enough, the Constitution made no provision for such a situation and it was remedied by the adoption of the 20th amendment, which became effective on February 6th, 1933. It provides that "If at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President-elect shall have died, the Vice President-elect shall become President." Strange too that such a situation never arose in more than 150 years of our national life. Nearest to it was William Henry Harrison who died 30 days after his inauguration, and Abraham Lincoln who was assassinated six weeks after his second inauguration.

THREE DAY RECESSES.

Congress is still in session. It has disposed of the immediate legislative calendar and is now taking a series of three-day recesses. This permits the members to return home to dispose of their affairs and at the same time keeps Congress alert to any eventualities which may arise. If Congress adjourns, it cannot come into session except by a call from the President for a special session. If it recesses to a certain day, it cannot re-convene until that day. The Constitution, however, permits each House to recess for periods not exceeding three days, without the consent of the other House. Without this provision a disagreement might arise between House and Senate whereby either of them could recess for a long period and take no action upon legislation passed by the other body and thereby stalemate the whole legislative process.

DEFENSE SPENDING AND PRICES.

Congress has authorized or appropriated about 17 billions for national defense. Additional sums will no doubt be provided to complete the defense program. These funds are used to buy planes, guns, food, clothing and a host of other things from American manufacturers. Add to this the normal purchases of the country and it represents a tremendous expenditure. This flow of dollars might provide a boom. It might also provide an increase in living costs and in general price levels. Expenditures during the first World War provides an example. From December 1914 to 1918, in the City of Chicago, food prices increased 79%, clothing 139%, fuel and light 37%, rents 2½%. Higher prices require higher pay checks. Higher pay checks in turn stimulate higher prices and thus the spiral of inflated prices gets under way. The National Defense Advisory Commission is now engaged in meeting this situation by advising industrial leaders against price raises and by so spotting defense purchases as not to unduly tax the capacity of various industries. If, however, prices should get out of hand to a point where no available remedy is adequate to meet the situation, it is entirely likely that an effort would be made to procure legislation from Congress to deal with this condition.

CONGRESSIONAL HUMOR.

Senator Barkley: "Am I to understand that the Senator is in the position of a justice of the peace who tried a case, listened to all the arguments and speeches and then said, 'The court will take this case

under advisement until next Thursday at which time he will render judgment for the plaintiff.'" (Laughter)

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Representative Gifford of Massachusetts: "The gentleman reminds me of the lady who could not suffer in silence because that took all the pleasure out of it." (Laughter)

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Senator Connolly: "It seems to me that if those in the galleries want to laugh or enjoy themselves at something that transpires in the Senate they should be permitted to do so . . . So many people 'cuss' the Senate that anyone who wants to approve or smile at us should be encouraged." (Laughter and applause)

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Representative Gifford: "Hush little deficit, don't you cry, You'll be a crisis by and by."

POLITICAL HOCUS POCUS.

A Michigan Congressman was enroute to Reading, Pennsylvania to make a speech. When the train stopped at Baltimore, he was handed a telegram stating that the Reading meeting had been cancelled. He, however, continued on to Reading and found that the meeting had not been cancelled. After diligent inquiry he learned the name of the party who had sent the telegram. He conferred with State and Federal authorities and found that there was no law on the matter which provided a remedy or penalty.

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The political opponent of a New Jersey Congresswoman received a telegram which was signed with her name, accepting his challenge for a public debate. The opponent wired back acknowledging her acceptance and stated that details would be arranged. She sent a reply wire stating that she knew nothing about a debate challenge. Shortly thereafter she was advised by the Western Union operator in the Senate office building that two young men had sent the telegram, signed her name and paid for it.