

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen
16th Illinois District.

A PERSONAL NOTE. The author of the Congressional Front is profoundly grateful for the privilege of having served the people of the 16th Congressional district and for the privilege of serving them in the new Congress which convenes on January 3rd 1943. He dedicates himself anew to the service of the people to the limit of his talents and energies.

ELECTION NOTE. The entire membership of the House of Representatives consisting of 435 members and one-third of the membership of the United States Senate consisting of 96 Senators went before the voters in 1942 to give accounting of their stewardship.

OLDEST MEMBERS. In point of service, Congressman A. J. Sabath of Chicago and Senator Ellison D. Smith of South Carolina are the oldest members of the House and Senate. Congressman Sabath will begin his 38th year in Congress on January 3rd while Senator Smith has served his state continuously in the Senate for 34 years. Only 16 members of the Senate have served 12 years or more.

ELECTORAL ODDITIES. In the election of 1938, the entire state of Alabama cast only 140,000 votes and has 9 members of Congress. Compare this with the state of Iowa which cast 825,000 votes in the same year and also has 9 members in Congress. Poll taxes and other restrictions have virtually disfranchised a large segment of the voters in southern states.

CHOSEN BY A FEW. In the 1st district of Alabama consisting of 7 counties, the total vote for Congressman in 1938 was only 9853 votes. In the 6th Congressional district of Georgia consisting of 16 counties, the total vote for Congressman was only 4363 votes. In the third Congressional district of Mississippi, the total vote for Congressman in 1938 was only 2172 votes. Compare that with a total vote of 96,000 cast in the 16th Congressional district of Illinois in the same year of 1938.

MULTIPLE NOMINATIONS. In a few states, candidates for Congress may file for and seek nomination on more than one party ticket. This obtains in California where four tickets appeared in the election. Many candidates had the nomination of both major parties and one candidate had the nomination of three different parties.

IN NEW YORK. New York has two Congressmen at large because the state has never been re-districted to provide for two additional members to which the state is entitled because of growth in population. For these two places, the Democrats, Republicans, Socialists and Communists each had two candidates on the ballot. The name of one of the Socialist candidates is Amicus Most.

WHAT'S IN A NAME. Picturesque names appear in all campaigns, In Oklahoma such names as Jack Nichols, Jed Johnson, Mike Monroney, Ross Rizley and Lizzie Varvil appeared on the ballot. In Oregon, Democratic candidate Nott was running against Republican Mott. In California, Will Rogers Jr. son of the celebrated humorist was a candidate for Congress in the Hollywood district.

HEAVY CAMPAIGNING. Wyoming with a population of 225,000 people has but one Congressman. He must campaign over the same area as a U. S. Senator. The state has an area of 98,000 square miles. Its extreme

length is 365 miles and its greatest width is 275 miles. A candidate can go for hours by car and not see a single voter. That would be strenuous campaigning.

RHODE ISLAND. "Little Rhodie" smallest state in union has but four counties and 2 Congressmen. Its total land area is about 1250 square miles. The state is about 35 miles wide and 50 miles long and can be crossed either way by automobile in less than an hour. Compare this compressed area with the wide open spaces of Wyoming.

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP IN CONGRESS. The first Congress in 1790 had but 65 members. As the nation grew, so the membership grew with each census because membership was based on population. In 1910, when the membership reached 435, it was determined to "freeze" the size of the House of Representatives at that figure. It has been 435 for the last 32 years. This means that instead of increasing the membership, the number of persons represented by a member (on the average) increases each year. In 1790, each member represented 30,000 persons. Today, each member on the average represents about 310,000. Largest Congressional district is in Illinois with a population of more than 900,000. The smallest is also in Illinois with 142,000. This is the 1st Congressional district of Chicago.

TURNOVER. The turnover in the membership of Congress is quite substantial from one term to another. It results from a number of factors. First comes that group which voluntarily retires from Congress. In the elections of 1942, 21 Democrats and 9 Republicans retired and did not become candidates to succeed themselves. Next comes primary defeats. In the 1942 primaries, 13 Democrats, 7 Republicans and 1 Farmer-Laborite were defeated making a total of 21. Next comes the Grim Reaper, to account for 6 Democrats and 1 Republican making a total of 7. Thus there would have been a turnover of 58 in the next Congress, beginning on January 3rd 1943, exclusive of the changes resulting from defeats in the general election. In round numbers, there will be a turnover of about 20% of the entire membership.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT. In Virginia, that state known as the Mother of Presidents, and the place from whence John Randolph, Patrick Henry and other great leaders came, the incumbent Senator Carter Glass affectionately referred to as an "unreconstructed rebel" was opposed for reelection to the United States Senate by Lawrence S. Wilkes on the Socialist ticket and Alice Burke on the Communist ticket.