

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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16th District.

RATIONING CONVERSATION.

We have coffee, tire, car, sugar and gas rationing. The question of "rationing people" to get an adequate supply of skilled and experienced people in the right places for essential work is now under discussion by the War Manpower Commission and other agencies of government. And now we have "rationing of conversation" on the telephone. In some of the critical defense areas such as New York, Washington, Miami and elsewhere the telephone load has become so heavy that it was deemed necessary to give preference to certain long distance calls. As a result, the Board of War Communications issued an order which went into effect on November 1st setting up three classes of priorities so that long distance calls may be classified under Priority 1, 2, or 3, depending on their nature. The order also defines preferred callers whose calls shall have preference over all others. Thus do we get to the "rationing of conversation" over the telephone.

MAKING TWO HOUSES GROW WHERE ONE GREW BEFORE.

In crowded defense areas where housing facilities are inadequate, the National Housing Agency has developed a program for the conversion of existing houses and other improved properties into rental dwelling units to meet the housing shortage. Store buildings, warehouses, large homes or other suitable structures are leased by the government on an agreed rental basis. The remodeling is done under government supervision. The government pays all taxes, assessments, insurance, interest and payments on the money invested in the building to make it a suitable dwelling place. These expenditures are charged against the rent which has been agreed on. After the war or the expiration of the lease, if it is found that more money has been spent to convert the building into housing units than the amount of the rent agreed upon, the balance of the payments are remitted. The net result of the program is to make housing available while it is needed and to leave the original owner with a much better building or house than he originally owned.

78th CONGRESS.

The 78th Congress will meet on January 3rd 1943. It may prove historic. Its first problem is to win the war. If the war terminates in 1943 or 1944, it will be confronted with the problems of peace, demobilization and post-war reconstruction. In the Senate there will be 38 Republicans 57 Democrats, 1 Progressive. The party ratio is close enough for carefully considered, sound legislation. In 1919, 1927 and again in 1931 there were 48 Republicans, 47 Democrats and 1 Progressive. Balance of power on close questions was really in the hands of the Progressive member. In the House will be 209 Republicans, 222 Democrats and 4 members from minor parties. Here again, the ratio is close enough for good results. In 1917, the ratio was 216 Republicans, 210 Democrats, 9 members from other parties. In 1931, it was 220 Republicans and 214 Democrats. Most unbalanced party ratio in the entire history of Congress occurred in 1937 when there were 89 Republicans 333 Democrats. Unbalanced government too often provides unbalanced results.

HOW ONE ECONOMIST REASONS.

When the war is over, there will be a fat war debt. It may even be fatter when expenditures for post-war reconstruction are added. Assume that war expenditures minus revenues derived from taxes leaves us with a debt of 160 billion. A certain economist has reasoned that since interest rates are about one-half of what they were in the "20's, we can carry a debt twice as large as our peace-time debt without any greater burden. Secondly he figures that if the war lasts for several more years, prices will finally double and stabilize at the higher levels. For prices to double means that the purchasing and paying value of the dollar has been reduced by 50% which in turn means that the interest payments on the principal amount of the debt would be paid in fifty-cent dollars. Thus he reasons that lower interest rates and higher prices would make it as easy to carry a 160 billion debt at the end of the war as to carry a 40 billion debt in peace-time. Ain't Nature wonderful.