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

AN ODDLY EMBARRASSING SITUATION. Many years ago, our country
negotiated some 35 treaties with other nations which contain a
 provision known as "the-most-favored-nation clause." In substance,
that clause is an assurance to all such nations that if we should
ever make a concession or give a trade advantage to anyone of the
35, the same concession or advantage is automatically made available
to all of the 35. There is however one country to whom that
advantage does not run and that is Germany. Now comes this situation:
Germany takes over Austria. Austria enjoys the so-called "most-
favored-nation" status with this country. Is Germany now entitled
to such status. That question is a bit vexing to those who guide
the international relations of the United States.

MEXICO. As you so well know, Mexico is a huge country, rich in oil
and minerals. Hundreds of millions of American capital are invested
in mineral and oil properties. Altho Mexico has been the scene of
political turbulence and revolution was as common as pig tails in
China, yet the work of developing these properties continued. Then
came Cardenas the present President who thought up the catchy slogan
"Mexico for the Mexicans." In pursuance of that slogan, the Mexi-
can government rather informally decided to take over the oil and
mineral properties owned by American capital. What shall be done
about this sudden grab? We cannot sit idly by and permit another
government to confiscate the property of our people because this
incident might be the beginning of a series of grabs by foreign
countries so that international property rights would no longer
exist. We cannot send soldiers to make the Mexicans behave be-
cause that would be an act of war. We cannot sue them in our courts
because we have no jurisdiction over them. We cannot sue them in
Mexican courts because they would not permit it. So what? Well for
the moment, the State Department is giving the whole matter serious
attention and seeking to work out a happy and agreeable solution,
probably on the basis of having the Mexican Government pay the
fair value of the properties which they have taken over. The
technical word for such a grab is "expropriation."

LAWYERS—WATCH YOUR INFLections. This week, the House passed a bill
introduced by Representative Hobbs of Alabama to wire the Federal
Court rooms of the land for sound. The bill now goes to the Senate.
If enacted, trials in Federal Courts will all be recorded by a
sound system and be available for reproduction in the higher court
if the case goes up on appeal. Thus will the furious shouts of the
prosecutor as he points his finger at the accused, or the gentle
purring of some gentle defendant be available to the learned
justices of the higher court if they seem unimpressed by the cold
type of the transcript of the case. Perhaps lawyers, like movie
stars will become temperamental and go in for courses in elocution,
the better to persuade the august justices in the higher courts
with dainty cadences and elegant diction.
HELIUM. A provision in the new super-Navy bill calls for the expenditure of $3,000,000 for further experimentation with dirigible airships of the Zeppelin type and that recalls the unfortunate experiences we have had with the Akron, the Akron, and the Shenandoah, all of which came to an untimely end and resulted in a loss of life. Some experts believe that these huge rigid airships have no military value. Others believe they do have. Germany seems to be the only nation that has been moderately successful with this type of aircraft. One of Germany's difficulties has been that she does not have a supply of helium gas, that non-explosive, buoyant gas that is so necessary for dirigibles. In fact, the United States seems to have a monopoly on natural helium and last year, the question arose as to whether we should sell helium to other nations. The matter was threshed out in Congress and a bill enacted to make helium available to other nations. With the restriction on its sale to other nations removed, the first shipment consisting of 17,000,000 cubic feet of helium started to Germany this week to inflate her new Zeppelin the LZ 130.

TOWNSEND PLAN. People interested in the Townsend Plan will be much interested in the recent action of the Ways & Means Committee of the House which virtually escaped attention. The Townsend Plan is set forth in a measure known as the General Welfare Bill. Since it is a revenue measure, it is automatically referred under the rules of the House of Representatives to that standing Committee known as the Ways and Means Committee. It has been pending in that Committee for a long time. On Monday, March 21, the majority members of that Committee met and voted "not to consider" this bill. That means that the bill is dead unless one of two things happen. Either, the members of that Committee must reconsider their action by petitioning the chairman for a further hearing on the bill or 218 members of the House must sign a petition to bring the bill to the floor by taking it away from the Committee. The first of these alternatives is not likely to happen. The second takes time because it is a considerable task to get 218 members to walk to the clerks desk and sign the petition. Hence it can be predicted that no action will be taken during the present session.

SPEAKING OF INCOME TAXES. We have in this country, a group of 2,350,000 persons who do not have to pay Federal Income Taxes, no matter how much their salaries might be. Want to know who they are? Well, here's the list: Governors and all state officials and state employees. Mayors, officials, and employees of all city governments. All county officials. Superintendents, principals and teachers in city and county schools. President, professors, instructors and also football coaches on the payroll of all state universities and state colleges. Supreme Court Justices, justices and judges of all state courts, county courts, municipal courts, state attorneys, sheriffs, and other officials. Want to know why? They are regarded as officials or employees of a state or a subdivision of a state such as a city, county, township, school district, or state institution and under the law as now interpreted, the Federal Government cannot exercise its taxing power against a state or state employees and officials nor against a unit of government created by the State. Reason given by the court is that the Federal Government could tax a state or its instrumentalities, it could destroy the states. On the other hand, Federal officials and employees do not pay state income taxes in the 22 states that have a state income tax on the same theory that the states could use the taxing power to destroy or nullify the activities of Uncle Sam. Sounds thin but that's the law.