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

THE MEANING OF SUEZ.
Look at a globe or world map. Locate India, Burma, Siam or any of the other countries in that general region. Now imagine yourself the captain of a merchant vessel about to carry a cargo of spices to Europe. First trace your course southward across the Equator, thru the Indian Ocean, around the tip of Africa, northward over the South Atlantic, once more across the Equator, then over the North Atlantic and finally thru your destination in Europe. Pretty long trip, huh? Now go back and make the trip by a different route. This time, go across the Arabian Sea, thru the Gulf of Aden, northward over the Red Sea, thru the Suez Canal, into the Mediterranean and so to your destination. What's the difference? Roughly about 4000 miles or at least two weeks of traveling. Figure two weeks of time for the crew, figure fuel and everything else and you see the meaning of Suez. The prospect of a Canal at Suez in Northern Africa was under consideration as early as the year 1504. In 1679, a book published in France dealt with the matter at length. Not until 1856 was a company organized to start work on Suez. That's 350 years after it was first proposed. For many years, Lord Palmerston, Prime Minister of Great Britain opposed the Canal. But Benjamin Disraeli had more vision. Only 6 years after the Canal was opened in 1869, he bought for Great Britain 50% of the shares in the Canal from the Khedive of Egypt. It was a fruitful stroke. The Suez became England's spinal cord. Normally, more than 6000 vessels use the Suez each year and tolls collected amount to $1400 million francs annually. This is the rich lifeline which makes the present African conflict so important.

THE UNIFORM.
On April 7, a bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate which bears the caption "An Act to protect the dignity and honor of the uniform of the United States." In substance, this proposal recites that no railroad hotel, theatre, restaurant or place of amusement or entertainment shall deny to any person who wears the uniform of the military or naval services of this country the equal and full privileges of such places. Any person in uniform who is debarred from such privileges can institute court action to collect actual damages plus $100. It is also made unlawful by this measure to cast contempt on a person in naval uniform who is debarred from such privileges can institute court action to collect actual damages plus $100. It is also made unlawful by this measure to cast contempt on a person in military or naval uniform and to do so is punishable by a fine not to exceed $500. This bill had an interesting genesis. A sergeant in uniform came to Washington and took his girl friend to a prominent hotel dining room for dinner. It appears that a waiter refused to serve them. It also appears from reports that the head waiter heaped abuse on them and freely stated that men in uniform were not wanted as patrons of the hotel's swanky dining room. The sergeant reported the whole affair to General Reckord of Maryland. The General was furious and demanded apologies. Out of this incident sprang the bill to equal privileges to soldiers and sailors.

OBITUARY
In the ordinary usage of the word, an ordinary obituary is a printed death notice. Which reminds us that we once knew a newspaper make-up man who got the obituary notices in the "Lost Column" and almost created an outrage. But what we started to say was that the Federal Power Commission recently rendered a report on the Passamquoddy project up in Maine which sounds to us like an obituary. Do you remember Passamquoddy? That was the project up near Eastport, Maine where the ocean tides were to be harnessed for electricity. It sounded a bit fantastic at the time it was proposed, but fantastic or not, the U.S. spent millions to develop this proposal. A large camp was built for engineers and workers. The cottages were fitted with grandfather clocks and pastel-green shades. It was very lovely. While all this was going on out of emergency funds, Congress was frothing over the nonsensicality of this scheme. Finally, "Quoddy" was abandoned. Can you guess why? Well, the truth is now out. The Federal Power Commission says it would cost $87 million to build that project for hydroelectric generation and that the same amount of energy could be gotten from steam plants costing only $57 million. It also said that power generated with this project would cost 10.77 mills per kilowatt whereas with steam it could be done for 5.57 mills. Thus a very realistic Federal agency has written Quoddy's obituary. But maybe it won't stay dead. Who knows?
JUST WHAT DID WILLKIE SAY.

There has been some controversy over the exact language that Wendell Willkie used when he testified before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in connection with the Lease-Lend bill. Here is the exact language of the Senate printed hearings as reported on page 905:

Senator Nye: One more assertion of yours, that of Oct. 30: "On the basis of his - (That is Roosevelt's) past performance with pledges to the people you may expect we will be in war by April 1941, if he is elected."

Mr. Willkie: "You ask me whether or not I said that?"

Senator Nye: "Do you still agree that that might be the case?"

Mr. Willkie: "It might be. It was a bit of campaign oratory. (Laughter)"