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

A TRADE AGREEMENT IN A NUTSHELL.

So much has been said and written about the Reciprocal Trade Agreement program and what it means to agriculture and industry. Arguments galore have been advanced both for and against such agreements. On April 1, 1939, a trade agreement was concluded between Turkey and the United States. Stripped of all detail, here is what it does:

Turkey says to the United States that it will reduce the duties on cattle hides, goat hides, dried prunes, canned prunes, prune juice, canned asparagus, rubber thread, plastic construction materials, asbestos brake lining, iron and steel plates, films, radios, sewing machines, typewriters, electric refrigerators, automobiles, heavy mineral oils, typewriter ribbons, varnish, insecticides and toothpaste IF THE UNITED STATES WILL REDUCE DUTIES ON THE FOLLOWING COMMODITIES TO BE IMPORTED FROM TURKEY: Valonia extract, cigarette tobacco, figs, raisins, filberts, pistachio nuts, poppy seed, canary seed, rugs, cymbals, meerschaum, licorice root, borax, chromite, emery ore, furs and fur skins, sausage casings and a few other items. Turkey agrees. The United States agrees. They put it in writing. It is signed. The agreement is made. There, folks, is a trade agreement.

IS A HORSE A MUNITION — OR IS HE.

In the existing Neutrality Act, which is now receiving sustained consideration by both the Senate and the House, is a provision which prohibits the shipment of munitions and supplies to belligerent nations. The act empowers the President to determine and proclaim the supplies and munitions which shall not be shipped. Now comes the American Humane Association, a federation of all societies interested in the prevention of cruelty to children and animals, and asks that horses and mules be included in the list of supplies which shall not be shipped to warring countries. That raises the interesting question of whether a horse or mule is a supply or a munition which might be properly included in the list of items which shall not be shipped. It now devolves on the President to determine whether Old Dobbin is a war supply. Ask any machine gun mule skinner or long-eared artilleryman.

THE HATCH BILL HAS NOT YET HATCHED.

Carl A. Hatch, a rather short-statured, spare, debonair, good-looking man of 50 with a genial smile, is the senior Senator from the sun-baked state of New Mexico. He has the qualities of tenacity and persistence. In January he introduced a bill, making it unlawful to intimidate or coerce any person at a primary election, convention, or general election. It also makes it unlawful for any Federal official or any state official paid with Federal funds to use his influence at a political convention or in an election and provides a fine of $5000 and/or 2 years in prison. This bill was modified so as not to apply
to primary elections and conventions on the ground that it might be unconstitutional. But it does apply to general elections and in that form it passed the Senate. Since then, it has been pending in the House Judiciary Committee but has received no action to date. An effort was made by Senator Guffey of Pa. to have the bill recalled to the Senate but the effort was unsuccessful. It will be interesting to see what happens to the Hatch bill and whether it will hatch, since it would prevent U. S. Marshals, U. S. Attorneys, Federal office holders, postmasters and others from political activity. Senator Hatch is a very persistent person.

$14.20 OUT OF EVERY $100 YOU EARN FOR TAXES

Mr. Lowell Parker is a very modest and studious person who serves as a tax expert for the Joint Committee of the House and Senate on Taxation and Revenue. His business is to advise the Committee on the intricacies of taxation and help devise the language that goes into the tax bills. Seldom does he allow himself the luxury of speculating on the general effect of taxes. But this week, in a statement aimed at the growth of double and multiple taxation, he stated that the average family, with an income of $1500 a year, owning an automobile which is driven an average of 30 miles a day, smoking one pack of cigarettes per day and consuming the equivalent of one quart of liquor per week, pays direct and indirect taxes to the tune of $213.20 per year. This would be the equivalent of 14.2% of the entire year's income and means that for every $100 earned, $14.20 goes for taxes. Ouch!

CRAB ORCHARD LAKE.

Down in Williamson County Illinois, the Land Acquisition Division of the Soil Conservation Service has acquired or will ultimately acquire about 26,000 acres of so-called submarginal land which will be converted into a lake to be known as Crab Orchard Lake. By means of relief labor, a dam was built, the total cost of which will aggregate about $1,250,000 for the purpose of impounding and holding the water. Land owners, school districts, villages, and cemeteries have been protesting this project on the ground that the water will be shallow and provide an excellent incubator for mosquitoes, that these various agencies will lose some of their tax revenues, that the only fish life which will abound in this made-water will be crawfish and bullfrogs, and that the project is unwanted. Having virtually completed this project, the Soil Conservation Service feels that it cannot undo it and therefore Crab Orchard Lake will be maintained. Thus the disporting crawfish is given a pretentious home by Uncle Sam. The bull frog has a glorified place to emit his melodious love call and the shades of the Shawnees may now return to commune on the shores of the Crab-apple-scented lake, made possible with Federal Funds.

THE NAVY APPROPRIATION BILL

This week, the House of Representatives will pass a bill appropriating about $772,000,000 for the Navy for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 1939. It is interesting to go back and note the progressive increase in appropriations for the Navy with the passing years. They tell their own story.

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