SEERS, SOOTHSAVERS AND SAPS. Under Section 899 of Title 20 of the Code of Laws for the District of Columbia you can hang out your shingle as a medium, clairvoyant, soothsayer, fortune teller, palmist, phrenologist or what have you on payment of an annual license fee of $25 with the further understanding that you can convince the Police Department that you are all right. In a city that contains the nation's capital and goes in for the hard realities of politics this is a strange anachronism. The city is well supplied with these practitioners of the occult art. Even Pennsylvania Avenue boasts a number of palmists and astrologers. They advertise in the telephone directory and purvey their fortelling abilities to the public by means of advertising cards. You can get your palm read for a quarter or a ten dollar bill. You can get the bumps on your head examined at uscalo of prices. The more you pay, the more bumps they'll find. All these peekurs-into-the-future wear oriental costumes, maintain swanky establishments where incense dulls the senses and stimulates the imagination, and do a thriving business. The amazing growth of this strange art of for- telling the future from lines in the right hand (never the left hand) or bumps on the head or the turn of a card may be ascribed to the depression and to the intense desire of human beings who have suffered from the ravages of the depression to find a modicum of sympathy and comfort from someone, somehow, somewhere.

NEUTRALITY AND STATESManship. To the fathers and mothers of the United States, a neutrality policy whereby we undertake to shape our relations with nations that are at war, is or ought to be of more than passing moment because a defective policy may mean that someday, their sons may be called upon to go forth to war even as young men of 1917 went forth to war, many of them never to come back. More than a year ago, Congress enacted a makeshift neutrality bill which was to expire by its own terms on May 1, 1937. That meant that another act had to be passed before that date or the old act continued by resolution of Congress. Committees of House and Senate got busy early in this session. The House passed the McReynolds Bill giving the President broad discretionary powers in embargoing shipments of supplies and munitions to warring nations. The Senate then passed the Pittman Bill, containing a cash-and-carry policy whereby warring countries could buy our supplies only if they came over in their own ships, bought and paid for the goods and took title before they left this country. This follows the mandatory theory. Then a conference committee of House and Senate got together to iron out the differences. This committee met in secret session. Senators such as Nye, Clark, Bone, Vandenberg who had been so active in the investigation of the munitions manufacturers were not appointed on the conference committee. This gave the State Department which inclines toward broad discretionary powers, to get in its work. It may be worth remarking that Mr. McReynolds, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee which handled the bill and Hon. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State are both from Tennessee and firm friends. The Senate Bill went into the proverbial ashcan and the House Bill prevailed. But the conference committee had to report back to both House and Senate and get approval of their handiwork, and have it signed by the President. So they waited right up to the last minute and then rushed it thru both bodies with a half hour discussion in the House and no record vote. A plane carried it to the President's boat in Florida waters for signature so it could be signed before Saturday when the old law expired. It is a regrettable example of shotgun statesmanship.

BIRDSEYE VIEW OF BANKS. There are 15,705 banks of all kinds doing business in this nation today. Roughly one third are national banks, two thirds are state commercial, mutual savings or private banks. Only 126 private banks still remain. If you looked at a consolidated statement of these 15,705 banks it would show the following picture. The total assets are a little over seventy billions of dollars. You spell that third to the last word with a "b" not an "m". This includes about $7 billion in real estate loans, 13 billion in other loans and rediscounts, 17½ billion in government securities, 16 billion in balances with other banks and the Federal Reserve, 16 3/4 billion in bonds and securities other than government bonds and the rest in real estate owned, cash in vaults etc. Now, on the liability side of the ledger you will cash 24 3/4 billion in demand deposits and
almost 24 billion in time deposits. That means that almost 49 billion dollars are on deposit today. Add to this the deposits of cities and counties, postal savings etc. and there is a total of over 61 billions on deposit in the 15,705 banks. Never in the history of the nation has so much money been on deposit in the banks, despite the fact that we have only about one half as many banks as we did about ten years ago. Couldn't we "go to town" with 61 billions on deposit.

A KIND WORD TO BUDDING INVENTORS. Be of good cheer. There are plenty of things left to invent. If you don't believe it, let us solemnly inform you that the Patent Office down here in Washington is issuing patents at the rate of a 1000 per week. Think of it. - 50,000 new devices, processes, or improvements being spun out of human imagination every year, not to speak of 10,000 trade mark registrations each year. In the last few years, more than 2,060,000 patents have been issued. Oddly enough, invention slumps in a depression period and picks up in prosperity. There are two reasons for that. The first is that in depressed periods, money for experimentation is not as plentiful as in good times so the work is slowed. The other is that the inventive faculty seems to be a bit dulled by adversity. Large corporate enterprises set aside huge amounts each year for research and invention. They have reduced it to a science. It costs $50 to file an application for a patent and another $50 when it's issued. This is aside from attorney's fees. Once a while we are out of luck. In one bordering district, a war veteran who lived in the country came rushing up to inquire about getting a patent on a device which he said would revolutionize the world but he refused to show it to anybody for fear the idea would be pilfered. Budding inventors may be interested to know that patent attorneys must first undergo a written examination and submit affidavits of character before being admitted to practice in the U.S. Patent Office. Attorneys who have been charged with breach of faith or ethics, if proved, are disbarred. There are about 9000 attorneys admitted to practice before the Patent Office and any inventor who is afraid of having his brain-child kidnapped can write to the Patent Commissioner and learn whether any certain attorney is on the list.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO. There are probably a million (it's only an estimate) elderly persons in the United States today who are not citizens and who under existing laws cannot become citizens. It is a serious matter with them because so many benefit laws such as Old Age Pension Laws are being enacted with a provision that the benefits are available only to those who are citizens of the United States. These old folks who are not citizens come over many years ago when immigration was heavy, laws were not so strict, and regulations few. Many of them took out first papers, thinking that nothing more was necessary for citizenship only to find that they waited so long, their first papers were of no force and effect. Others did not attempt to qualify because they could not learn our language. Others could not sign the petition for citizenship in their own handwriting. Strange cases have been presented to Congress. One old gentleman voted for 32 years before he learned that he was not a citizen. Another served 16 years in the Army and then learned he was not a citizen. These old people lawfully entered this country and are lawfully here. Their children are grown up, married and have children of their own. They cannot be deported. Nor can they qualify for citizenship because they're too old to readily learn our language or learn to write their names. If their first papers have been invalidated because they waited too long, they must start all over and that would require five years. Under such circumstances what would you do? A bill is now before Congress which seeks to waive some of these requirements in order that those who came to this country before 1917, are 50 years of age or older, can become citizens. The requirement of good moral character would not be waived.

CATTLE TICKS AND DEER. In sections of Texas, La., Florida and other states, cattle ticks became so destructive that the Federal Government in cooperation with the state governments carried on a vigorous campaign for their eradication. Both regular funds and emergency funds were employed for this purpose. Then it was discovered that wild deer, especially in Florida were a source of infestation of cattle ticks and served as carriers of this pest. Some deer were trapped, examined and dipped but others had to be slaughtered because it is difficult to trap these wily animals. The campaign was successful and most cases were freed from the cattle tick quarantine but now comes the state of Florida thru one of its Congressmen, asking Uncle Sam for
$25,000 with which to replace the deer that were slaughtered. Ain't Nature grand!

SMOKY FOUNDATION. Believe it or not but a substantial part of the fiscal foundation of the Federal Government is built on smoke. In fact, 7% of it is built on smoke. Those who puff on fragrant cigars and find surcease from the dull cares of the day may be happily oblivious of the fact that for the fiscal year 1938, they will pay Uncle Sam about 13 million in taxes on cigars; those who like a short smoke in the form of a cigarette will pay the trifling sum of 492 millions, snuffers will pay but 7 million; pipe-smokers, the roll-your-own artists, and those hardy souls who find delight in a succulent quid will pay about 56 million. The total will be 569 million. At the rates that taxes have been increased on smokes, we may conceivably smoke our way back to a balanced budget. Before the war, the Federal tax on cigarettes was 2½¢ per package. In October 1917, it was raised to 3 1½¢. A month later it was raised to 4¢. After the 18th amendment became effective and the Federal Treasury lost the revenues from liquor, the cigarette tax was increased to 6¢ a package and now brings 492 millions a year. The 18th amendment was repealed and revenues from beer and liquor for the next fiscal year will bring approximately 850 millions a year but the 6¢ tax on cigarettes remains. Drinkers and smokers therefore produce well over a billion a year in taxes. Add to this the revenues derived from liquor and smokes by cities, counties and states and you'll agree that substantial part of our fiscal structure rests on a smoky foundation.