Early in the present session of Congress, the Ways & Means Committee of the House began to hold hearings on suggested changes in the Social Security Act. The scope of these hearings was gradually broadened so that testimony on the Townsend Plan, the General Welfare Act, the tax features of the Social Security Act and other items could be taken. The testimony was very voluminous. The whole matter is now before the Committee and the members are wrestling with these problems behind closed doors in executive session. Recently, Dr. Townsend has filed with the Committee certain modified proposals which are designed to replace the pension provisions of the Social Security Act. No action has been taken on these proposals by the Committee. No bill has yet been written. It is all in the preparation stage.

SO WHAT?

Note for the diary: Friday, May 5th. Dawned beautifully. Sun was bright. Summer is in the air. The capitol's astir. The President, Vice President, 8 Cabinet members, Chief Justice, Speaker of the House and other dignitaries wait in the Presidential reception room at Union Station for the arrival of General Anastasio Somoza, President of Nicaragua. The train is 50 minutes late. Everywhere are soldier, Marines, spirited horses, colorful crowds. The President of Nicaragua rules over 1,133,000 people. Rules is the word. He is a stern Dictator. One's thoughts roam on the subject of feting a Dictator. A bit curious. The train arrives. There are greetings and introductions. The party enter motorcars. The parade gets under way. From Union Station to the Capitol plaza. Thence down Constitution Avenue to Pennsylvania. That's a bit funny. Parade in honor of a Dictator moving down Constitution Avenue. Thence to the White House. Thirty tanks are in line. There is the clatter of horses hoofs on the pavement. Ten thousand of Uncle Sam's finest are in line. Scout cars, and military equipment lend color to the pageant. Forty-two pursuit planes drone over the capital in honor of Somoza. It is styled the greatest display in the 159 years since Washington was made the Capitol of the United States. A great parade for the Dictator of a little country. We abhor dictatorship. Oh well, you try to put it together.

ONE PROBLEM BEGETS ANOTHER.

It can probably be said in fairness and accuracy that wages and wage rates are higher in the North than in the South. It is also true that there is less labor organization in the South than in the North. As a consequence, the Wagner Labor Relations Act has not provoked as many controversies in the South as in the North. This of course might be an inducement for an industrial plant to move from a northern to a southern state. But it costs money to build new plants and to move machinery and supplies. Hence, funds must be found before such a removal could be made. A textile mill, in Massachusetts, for reasons unknown decided to build a new finishing mill in a southern state. To do so required funds. It made application to the Reconstruction
Finance Corporation for a loan in the sum of $1,700,000. The loan has been tentatively approved. The construction of a new mill in the South would probably mean the dismantling of existing mills in the textile centers of eastern states. Accordingly, Senator Green of Rhode Island has introduced a bill to prohibit the loaning of RFC funds for the purpose of enabling an industry to migrate from one section to another. This of course will add fuel to the constant controversy between North and South and so the Civil War will be refought.

A CHICAGO CARPENTERS WIFE MAKES THE NEWS.

Before the Federal Monopoly Investigating Committee consisting of Senators, Congressman and Departmental Experts last week came Mrs. Alice Belester of Chicago. She is the wife of a Chicago carpenter. She is modest. She is able. She testified how she and her husband "ate well and hearty" on a food budget of $210 per year and showed how low food costs were the result of careful buying. Also, she told a dramatic story to the Committee of how she and 7 other housewives worked together to check on honesty in the advertising of food products and how this little group of eight expanded into the United Conference Against The High Cost of Living which today numbers nearly 80,000 housewives. Truly, here is a dramatic tale of what zeal and the desire to serve can do. Hats off to the modest wife of a humble Chicago carpenter.

FROM ROPE ARENA TO SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM.

Back in 1911 or 1912, when Jack Johnson wrested the heavyweight crown from Jim Jeffries, a considerable sentiment developed against shipping prize fight films in interstate commerce and as a result, Congress enacted a law which prohibited such shipments. That law is still on the books. But now comes U. S. Senator Warren K. Barbour of New Jersey with a bill to repeal that law. The Senator is the former amateur heavyweight champion of the United States and Canada. He is still interested in the fistic art. To assist him in his assault upon the present ban against sending fight films in interstate commerce, he has summoned two other heavyweight champs to appear before the Senate subcommittee on Interstate Commerce and testify. They are Jack Dempsey and Jim Jeffries. If Tunney and Joe Louis appear, there will be a committee room full of champs.

MAGNITUDE.

Magnitude is another way of saying bigness. And we go in for bigness. When we prosper, we prosper big. When we fight, we fight big. Witness the World War. When we decline, we decline big. Witness the 10 year depression. When we go in for government, we go in in a big way. On January 1, 1939, we had 918,861 persons on Uncle Sam's payroll, not counting army, navy, relief etc. The average salary is $155 per month. In 1916 there were but 438,000 persons on the payroll. The monthly payroll for the Executive branch of the government is over $142,000,000. Our government is sprawled thru 107 buildings in Washington aggregating more than 13,000,000 square feet of space. Four new buildings are under construction with an additional 13 million square feet of space. In addition we rent many buildings in Washington and throughout the country for Federal activities. Yes, we go in for bigness, including big deficits.