On May 16, 1917, the Congress of the United States passed the so-called Draft Act under which citizens between certain ages were conscripted for military service. War had been declared only six weeks before. On May 16, 1940, the President brought his message on national defense to the Congress. Personal delivery of the message was not determined until about 10:00 o'clock the night before. Consequently, there was rare activity at the Capitol early in the morning of May 16th. Reserved tickets for the galleries had to be issued. The House and Senate work calendars had to be changed. Notices had to be sent. The Cabinet and the diplomats had to be notified. Barricades used in shutting off corridors and stairways had to be hauled out and dusted. Platoons of police had to be provided at all exits and entrances. Passes had to be issued. So, the President came at 1:00 o'clock. He spoke for 30 minutes. The chamber and the galleries were jam-packed. One rather tearful lady on leaving the gallery said, "It's practically war already." But it wasn't! And it isn't! Washington is free from hysteria and emotionalism. Congress particularly has exhibited a most sedate state of mind about the European situation. In fact, a note of cold realism is discernible everywhere on the floor of Congress and in the cloakrooms. There is complete unanimity of sentiment that we must have national defense which is adequate to the present condition and that each dollar expended must be made to count.

SOMEBEFORE ARE THREE COUNTIES.

The 48 states of the Union are carved up into 3071 counties. In 3068 of these counties, the Public Works Administration has over a period ranging from 1933 to 1940, allotted funds for the construction of 34,468 projects, the estimated construction cost of which was close to Six Billion Dollars. This averages about 11 projects per county and includes all manner of construction such as sewers, streets, highways, schools, naval vessels, camps, airports, hospitals, reformatories, bridges, tunnels, viaducts, flood control projects and many others. Now, note that there were three counties in the nation which did not receive a single project or a single dollar of Public Works funds. This is indeed interesting. Indeed it's nothing short of phenomenal. To think that out of an enormous expenditure of billions of dollars, three whole counties in the space of 7 years did not provide or could not set up a single project. Want to know what counties they are? Kenedy County, Texas; Trimble County, Kentucky; Ohio County, Indiana.
Do you remember the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin who lured the rats of Hamelin away with his sweet piping music and who thereafter lured all the children away because the officials of that mythical Dutch village refused to pay him? Well, New Orleans didn't exactly have a Pied Piper but they did have rats and thereby hangs a tale. New Orleans as you know is a port town. Conditions were most unsanitary and added to that is the fact that it had an ancient system of garbage disposal. So it came about that New Orleans officials prevailed upon the Federal Government to assist with what was known as a project for rodent control. It included trapping rats, placing rat poison in public buildings, making laboratory examinations of trapped rats, vessel inspection etc. The city put up a trifle over $14,000 and Uncle Sam put up nearly $600,000. This enterprise continued for quite a period and finally a report was made. Based upon the number of rats which were trapped, it was estimated that the cost was $2.97 per rat. Wonder how much the Pied Piper asked the burgomaster of Hamelin to pay for luring away the rodents?

PAGE MR. RIPLEY RIGHT QUICK.
(or All In The Day's Mail)

Down in Mexico City, a man who signs himself as Mr. A. is languishing in jail because he went into bankruptcy. His letter fails to say that taking bankruptcy is a criminal offense in Mexico but in any event, Mr. A. is in jail. He says that he cannot get out without money. He states also that his whole existence and the future of his daughter is at stake. Of course, he has plenty of money but can't get at it. In fact, says Mr. A., in the secret compartment of a trunk there is lodged the respectable sum of $285,000 in U. S. currency and the trunk is located in an unnamed customs house in the United States. Mr. A. has the baggage check for the trunk. But unfortunately, the baggage check is in one of his suitcases but he cannot get at the suitcase until he gets out of jail. What Mr. A. is therefore seeking is some person with a kind face, a soft heart (and perhaps a soft head) who will come to Mexico City at his own expense, pay the litigation costs so that Mr. A. can get out of jail. For this trifling favor, Mr. A. is willing to share one third of the $285,000 but it must be done quickly. Mr. A. intimates that it is a very delicate matter. (We probably agree with him.) Consequently he could not sign his correct name to the letter. Instead, he asks any person who is moved to action by his predicament to write to a friend of his in Mexico City. The letter should go by air-mail. The friend's name by the way is Jesus Diaz. Think of the romance and adventure that is suddenly presented by such a casual letter which is but part of the grist that comes to the desk each day.

THE GHOST OF BILLY MITCHELL.

Brigadier General William Mitchell was Chief of the U.S. Army Air Corps during the world war. In his heart and mind was a vision of national defense by means of airplanes. He contended that in the future, armies and navies would be useless without an adequate aerial defense arm.
He lectured and wrote on the subject. He argued with Congressional Committees. He talked to any and all who would listen. His remarks did not sit well with the brass hats. He was demoted. He accused high officers of the army and navy of incompetence. For this he was court martialed. Congressman Frank R. Reid of Aurora, Illinois served as Mitchell's defense counsel at the trial. Billy Mitchell, who like some modern Cato sung his song of air defense needs was cashiered. That was 16 years ago. It has remained for other nations to prove and for Winston Churchill to admit that Billy Mitchell was right. Today, the accent's on planes.

PRESIDENTIAL POSSIBILITIES.
XI. James A. Farley - Democrat.

Is there anyone in this broad land who is not familiar with the name of genial Jim Farley, Postmaster General since 1933, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee since 1932, possessed of a capacious memory, a vigorous handshake, a genial smile, and a multitude of friends. He was born at Grassy Point, N.Y. on May 30th 1888 and now lives at Haverstraw, N.Y. He will therefore be 52 in May 1940. He attended high school and commercial school and married in 1920. He has two daughters and a son. He began at the bottom as town clerk for Stony Point, N.Y. and has since that time held positions as supervisor; member of the legislature, chairman of the N.Y. Athletic Commission, Democratic county chairman, Democratic state chairman, delegate to national conventions, Democratic National Chairman, and Postmaster General. His father was a brick manufacturer and Jim Farley is by occupation a contractor. He belongs to many clubs, lodges and fraternities and hold seven honorary degrees from colleges and universities. For a long time, there was speculation as to whether he would be a candidate. He himself dispelled that speculation by stating that he is a candidate. It is said that he will command a very substantial number of delegates when the convention meets at Chicago.