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

THUS ENDETH THE LESSON.

The noble King of France,
He had ten thousand men,
He marched them up the hill
And then marched down again.

In the three or four legislative days before Memorial Day when the $2 billion relief appropriation bill was before the House, the majority members took the bit in the teeth and began to do some fancy prancing. The bill was literally plastered with amendments. It was rollicking and hilarious session and when the smoke cleared away, 300 million had been tagged for public works, 55 million for flood control, 150 million for roads and highways. Came the June Memorial recess. Came also a multitude of telegrams requesting the members not to divert relief funds to construction uses. Came conferences between the rebels and the House leaders. Came Tuesday June first when debate was to be resumed. Came more amendments. Came a speech by Sam Rayburn of Texas admonishing the members to be good and go along. Came speeches similar to that of Rep. McClellan (D) of Ark., who said "They may force somebody to retreat. They may force my good friend (Joe Starnes) of Alabama and others to wait until the next time to start, but as for me, there will be no retreat. I am ready to settle this issue now." At 9:15 at night came the first roll call to sustain the 300 million dollar amendment previously adopted by a 3 to 1. The amendment went down to defeat by a vote of 231 to 147. By a similar vote the $55 million for flood control was taken from the bill. By a vote of 207 to 168 the amendment to tag 150 million for roads came out. By a vote of 273 to 96, the amendment to cut the salary of Harry Hopkins came out. By a vote of 326 to 44 the bill passed the House and thus ended the lesson. The House was back at the bottom of the hill.

JUST LIKE RIDING ON COTTON. Cotton has always been synonymous with a dainty softness, and while the expression is not especially apt, we have often heard folks speak of an easy restful ride in a vehicle as "just like riding on cotton." Soon to be a reality perhaps but we don't know about the softness. We continue to produce cotton. We continue to produce more cotton and as it's culture extends into the broad flat lands of Texas and Oklahoma where it can be farmed with tractors instead of a little old shaky mule, we become more and more alarmed about the cotton surplus. Then too, Oriental and South American countries are expanding cotton acreage and threatening our export markets. What then, is left for us. One thing at least that we can do. Department of Agriculture experts are giving close attention to the possibilities of mixing cotton fabric with bituminous materials such as tar, asphalt and other binders as a base for surfaced roads, for airport runways and other purposes. So the day may soon be here when you'll be riding on cotton. These chemists and experts do think of the most amazing things!

OF WARS AND INSURANCE AND VETOES. War is synonymous with death. War increases the hazards of life. These hazards cannot be computed. Hence, insurance companies usually inserted a clause in insurance policies to the effect that they were not insuring against the hazards of war. Yet war meant death and death meant that dependent women and children would be left behind. And who was to care for them? Thus it was that Uncle Sam set up War Risk Insurance for the soldiers during the World War and persuaded these young men to carry insurance policies. These policies were written on the basis of a net level premium without cash or surrender values so that the cost to the soldier would be as low as possible. When the war was over and the soldiers returned to civil life, there came the problem of making this insurance self-sustaining and placing it on a basis comparable with insurance written by private companies. But the cost of converting these low-cost term policies to endowment or limited payment life policies was a big load for the young men trying to readjust themselves to the arts of peace. Thus it was that Congress provided them with a five year period in which to convert these policies in the hope that in that time their earnings would improve and the load be less onerous. Several times, this period was extended for another five years. It expired on June lst. Somehow in May Congress extended it for another five years. The President vetoed this measure on the ground that 85% of the soldiers had converted their insurance and to permit an extension for the remaining 15% at low rates only placed an additional burden upon the 85% because
the low rates for the 15% did not actually carry the cost of the insurance. But the Veterans organizations protested that the ex-service men in the 15% group were not averse to carrying the load for their unfortunate or distressed comrades in the 15% group for another five year period and requested that the veto be overridden. By a vote of 69 to 12 in the Senate and by 372 to 13 in the House, the President was reversed.

HOT OIL. You've heard of hot money, hot cars, and hot merchandise. Then come "hot oil." Down in the oil fields of Texas, Okla., and other southwestern states, wildcat drillers would take over a piece of property, drill a well, and bring in a supply of oil. Next came the problem of marketing this black gold. Established companies had their own supply and it therefore became necessary to crash the market with lower prices. The result was price demoralization and price cutting. Everybody including labor in the oil fields suffered. State administrations took a hand, passed laws to prorate production and stop this waste of an exhaustible natural resource. Wildcatters then began to bootleg their oil across state lines to avoid state regulation of production and this product became known as "hot oil." Then Congress stepped in and enacted the Connolly Act, defining controlled oil and prohibiting its transportation in interstate commerce. The law imposed a heavy fine on transporting "hot oil" across state lines. The act expires June 16th 1937 so Congress has renewed it for another two year period. Proponents of the bill contended it was a conservation measure. Opponents said it was a price fixing bill. Following figures on gasoline prices may be of interest; taken at the first of the month in the year designated for 50 representative cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Service station price excluding tax</th>
<th>Service station price including tax</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>25.41</td>
<td>25.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>20.09</td>
<td>23.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>16.17</td>
<td>19.45</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>12.41</td>
<td>17.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>19.45</td>
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THE EVER PRESENT PROBLEM OF JOBS. The Civil Service Act provides that appointments to the Executive branch of the government service in Washington, D.C. shall be apportioned among the several states and territories upon the basis of population as ascertained by the last preceding census. There are at the present time, 39,744 such Civil Service appointments in the nation's capital. Now comes the squabble. There are seven states or subdivisions that have more jobs than their share. For the most part these states lie close to Washington, D.C. under the apportionment rule would be entitled to only 155 jobs but actually it has 8982. (In strict fact, it should be said that most of these people are not native to Washington and have come in from other states.) Maryland would be entitled to 520 but actually has 1941. Virginia would be entitled to 772 but actually has 1941. But now a merry row is brewing. Thirty nine states and 3 territories have less than their share and want the available government jobs distributed in accordance with the Civil Service act. It will probably prove an abortive attempt. It has been tried before. Illinois by the way is entitled to 2451 of these positions but actually has only 1665.

CHRONOLOGY OF ALKY-GAS PROPOSAL. Under impetus of low corn prices prevailing in 1931 and 1932, Paul Beshers of Gridley Illinois proposes the conversion of corn into alcohol to be mixed with gasoline as a motor fuel. Proposal taken up by Gridley Lions Club. Brought to attention of Lions Clubs International. Taken up by manufacturers of farm machinery and equipment, notably Keystone Steel & Wire Company of Peoria. Taken up by the American Chemical Foundation of New York. Demonstration of relative efficiency of alky gas as a motor fuel on Memorial Highway in Washington, attended by Senators, Congressmen, auto experts, chemists, government officials and others. Many bills introduced in Congress. Comes the drouth of 1934. Corn prices rise. Interest in alky-gas wanes. Drouth of 1935. Corn prices rise further. AAA declared unconstitutional. Further search for a farm control program. Soil Conservation and domestic allotment plan adopted by Congress. Corn prices rise. Prospects of large future crops. Interest in agricultural remedies are renewed. American Chemical Foundation aids in establishment of an alcohol plant at Atchinson, Kansas for production of alcohol to be used with gasoline. Capacity of the plant is 10,000 gallons per day, all of which has been contracted by petroleum companies. Congress provides $15,000 in the 1939 agricultural
Appropriation Bill for researches in alky-gas. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils now making a survey of its possibilities. Interest increasing.

CROSSED WIRES. The relief appropriation bill providing one and one half billions of dollars passed the House about midnight of June 1st after a hectic twelve-hour session marked with heat and noise and fury. Biggest argument centered around the proposal to earmark 300 millions of these funds for the Public Works Administration proposals and 150 millions for highways. From the time the House left its labors on the relief bill before memorial day until it resumed consideration of the bill on June first, every Member was literally deluged with letters and telegrams for and against earmarking the funds made available in the bill. The Chief Engineer of the Dept. of Highways for the State of Pennsylvania wired all Pennsylvania members urging them to support the amendment which would set aside the 150 million for roads. On the heels of this came a lengthy wire from the Governor of Pennsylvania urging all Penna. Members not to earmark any funds for highways, stating further that he would ask other Governors to do likewise. Then came a telegram from the Secretary for Highways of the State of Pennsylvania repudiating the telegram of the Chief Engineer on the same department. Thus were the wires crossed, both literally and figuratively speaking.