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

WILLKIE ECHO.
The Tennessee Valley project of Uncle Sam consists of a series of a dozen dams on the Tennessee River and its tributaries to make the river navigable, to provide flood control, and to provide for the generation of electric power. When completed, it will cost well over one half billion dollars. It has been a highly controversial undertaking because the sale of electric power has had a distressing effect upon the security values of private power companies which operated in that area. Obviously, if Uncle Sam produces power, he must find an outlet for such power. He must find, new consumers, build new transmission lines, new facilities or else take over existing lines. Uncle Sam's real private competitor in this area was the Commonwealth and Southern Company which controlled many operating electric utility systems in this Tennessee, Alabama and adjoining area. Wendell Willkie was the Chairman of the Board of this company. For years, Willkie fought government expansion at the expense of his own investors. Last year he consummated a deal whereby Uncle Sam took over a number of the Commonwealth outlets for which the Federal Government paid about $75,000,000. This arrangement was approved by Congress and the money was appropriated. And now for the echo. The electric lines, plants and facilities owned or controlled by Commonwealth and Southern paid taxes like any other owner of private property. When Uncle Sam took over, these properties could not be taxed by state and local government. Thus, the state of Tennessee and its counties, cities and school districts were suddenly confronted with a loss of tax revenues amounting to more than $3,512,000. For a small state with limited revenues, this was a truly difficult problem. Two courses were open. One was for the state and its subdivisions to find new sources of revenue or increase existing tax rates. The other was to ask Uncle Sam to dig into the Treasury and make good these tax losses. Thus in the month of June 1940, a measure was enacted by Congress after a stiff fight which provides for replacing these losses out of the Federal Treasury. The taxpayers of the other states of the union which derive no benefit from the TVA project will help the Tennessee taxpayers for the revenues which were replaced when Uncle Sam took over these properties. Now for a query? Will Oregon, Washington, Colorado, California and other states where Federal power projects are located also knock on the door of Congress and ask for replacement of lost tax revenues?

BETTER WRITE PLAINLY.
Yes folks, you better write plainly and make sure of the address and of adequate postage on that package which you're sending by Uncle Sam's postoffice service or it'll wind up in the dead letter office. Be sure also of the return address. If you don't, whatever merchandise you send will finally be auctioned off by Charlie Kracke the veteran auctioneer of the Dead Letter Office. Last week, a milling, sweating crowd of 500 or more, wholly oblivious to the heat watched, listened and bid at the periodic auction sale. And what an array of items! Here was variety to gladden the heart of the most inveterate devotee of rummage sales. Here were sleds, Bibles, horse collars, pajamas, fishing rods, paint brushes, cream separators, cross cut saws, complete works of Shakespeare and what not. There was one item of 10 brassiers. The auctioneer received no bids and finally the entire lot was purchased by an elderly little lady for $1.50. And what a dramatic tale might be spun by some word wizard around the gold ring which was auctioned off for inside the band was engraved that eternal and timeless music, "I love you."

WHISKERS AND THE PRESIDENCY.
In the long array of candidates for the Presidency, whose names were submitted to the convention at Philadelphia, Dewey alone could boast of hisrute facial adornment in the form of a moustache. All others were without a trace of whiskers. All of which brings to mind that of the 20 Republican nominees for the Presidency since the Civil War, only two were adorned with moustaches. These were Roosevelt and Taft. The
rest were either beardless or wore a full facial crop. Lincoln was clean shaven until after election and grew a beard between the November election and the inauguration in the following March. Grant, Hayes, Harrison and Garfield were equally adorned with bushy beards. McKinley, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover and Landon were dear to the hearts of the tonsorial artists because they were clean shaven. And now comes Willkie to swell the percentage in favor of the group who were beardless, whisker-less, and without a moustache.

ECHOES OF THE FRUIT FLY.

On the 6th of April 1929, the Mediterranean fruit fly was discovered in an orange grove at Orlando Florida. There was consternation among the growers because they had heard of this pest. They rushed to Washington at once for help and 23 days later Congress provided $4,250,000 for the control and eradication of this pest. There were other funds provided also and when the story was finally written, Uncle Sam had provided nearly $7,000,000 for this pest. The fly was conquered and in the following years, the yield and quality of oranges, grapefruit and tangerines increased. That was 11 years ago. Two years ago, some of the growers felt that although the Federal Government had been most generous in providing funds to control this pest, it should be made to pay for the damage caused to fruit trees, livestock and also for the labor involved in destroying spoiled fruit. A Board was appointed to survey the damage. That Board estimated the damage at more than $7,000,000 including more than $3,000,000 for estimated price losses on fruit. Floridians are now making a determined attempt to secure approval of a claim for this amount. The years have a way of softening the emotion of gratitude.

WHEELS AND MORE WHEELS.

The records of the Bureau of Public Roads indicate that for the year 1939, a total of 31,009,870 automobiles were licensed for the entire country and that this constitutes a gain of 1,129,407 over 1938. Such a gain is worthy of note. In addition, Uncle Sam owns 121,270 cars and the states, cities and counties own 273,513. There is therefore a car for every 4.3 persons. California has the most cars per capita, since it can show an auto for every 1.4 persons while Alabama is low with one car for every 9.1 persons. This motor empire provides a substantial revenue in the form of fees. Total collected for all license purposes in 1939 was more than 412 million dollars. The average license fee in Vermont is higher than any other state in the union. It averages 23.03 for all cars. Georgia is lowest with an average of 3.45. Oddly enough, the state of Nebraska is the only state in the union which did not show an increase in car registrations in 1939. In Illinois, total number of motor cars registered for 1939 was 1,863,486. This is a gain of 3.9% over 1938 and accounted for $24,352,000 in motor vehicle fees. If you see a license number over 1,863,486 you will know that 1940 shows a gain over 1939.

WE ARE A COMMEMORATIVE PEOPLE.

Yes, we are a commemorative people. We like to commemorate, recognize, acknowledge, and show appreciation for persons, names, dates, events, places, objectives, programs and what not. Best evidence can be found in the resolutions which appear before Congress at each session to set aside some day, week, month, or year in honor of something or somebody. It is the same urge which prompts many measures at each session to strike off commemorative coins or postage stamps. There are pending at this time, resolutions to designate American Music Month, Citizenship Recognition Day, Inventors and Patents Day, National Advancement Week, Farm Day, National Aviation Day, National Youth Citizenship Day, and many others. Two resolutions are intriguing. One might be said to be a bit whimsical and the other cynical. The first is a resolution introduced by Senator Bilbo to designate a day as Doctors Day. As the Senator says, it would be a day on which to send messages of love and affection to the family doctor. The other is a resolution by Senator Nye of North Dakota to issue a special 3-cent stamp to commemorate the default in payments on the war debt by European nations.