By Congressman Everett M. Dirkson
16th (Ill.) District.

(Ad~uthor's Note: The author of the Front sponsored an amendment to the OPA Act which was adopted by the House, giving to any person who is aggrieved by action of the OPA, a chance to have his case heard in any Federal District Court.)

HIS DAY IN COURT

What a common phrase that is. Behind it is a lot of history, tears and blood. June 15th marked the 730th anniversary of the Magna Carta or Great Charter. It came about when the barons and clergy of England who had been oppressed by a foul and evil king, compelled him to sign the Great Charter which safeguarded their liberties. One of the things of which they complained was that this notorious ruler travelled from place to place for his own pleasure, he took the Court with him. As a result, people with grievances had to travel long distances away from home and with much inconvenience to obtain justice. The Charter guaranteed them an opportunity for justice in their own counties. But this charter of liberty did not endure without struggle and sacrifice.

A~OTHER DOCUMENT

July 4th marks the anniversary of another charter. Still another stupid king named George III, who spent the crown revenues on war, sought to squeeze additional taxes from a few million people in America. That was back in 1775. There began a series of events which culminated in another charter of liberty and independence. It remained for a red-haired Virginian named Jefferson to write out an indictment of the King and then declare independence. In that declaration of independence, Jefferson wrote that the king called legislative bodies together "in unusual, uncomfortable and distant places ... for the sole purpose of fatiguing them (the people) into compliance with his measures." How modern that sounds. It's an old story of rulers and governments who call courts and legislative bodies together in distant places to "fatigue" people into compliance. It's the story of OPA. The very act creating OPA also created a special Emergency Court of Appeals which at first set only in Washington and made it difficult for people to have their day in court.

SOME CURRENT HISTORY

When the President seized Montgomery Ward, not even Sewell Avery was denied his day in court. If that is good for the biggest merchant in the land, why not for the merchant on Main Street. The government proceeded slowly against John L. Lewis because it knew that he would avail himself of the right to appeal to the courts. Why not the same right for any citizen who has a grievance with his government. The National Labor Relations Board, with all its vexatious problems has always had to test its procedures in a court. The War Production Board has asked for no authority to by-pass the courts. The Selective Service System which has impressed itself on millions of citizens and provided a huge military force has tested out its authority in the case of draft evaders, in the regular courts of the land. For any agency of government, whether it be OPA or any other to contend that it cannot enforce its decrees and mandates unless the citizen is first denied free access to a convenient court is a confession of ineptitude and failure. If there is one thing which history abundantly proves, it is that when justice is denied, liberty is done. The age-old dream of freedom is never an accomplished fact. It is a continuing challenge in every generation. It is a challenge ever new.