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

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY.

It can scarcely be said that until now, we have had a national co-
ordinated transportation policy. Since 1887, railroads have been
rather closely regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The
Motor Carrier Act of 1935 placed regulation of motor trucks in a sep-
arate division of the Commission. Inland waterway transportation has
always been regulated by the Inland Waterways Corporation as an adjunct
of the War Department. When air transport began to develop, it was
regulated in part by the Bureau of Air Commerce in the Department of
Commerce, in part by the Post Office Department and in part by the
Interstate Commerce Commission. Later, the whole field of civil
aeronautics was turned over to a newly created agency called the Civil
Aeronautics Authority. There was only a modest bit of coordination
between these various agencies. For the first time, a clearly stated
transportation policy has been set forth as a part of the Transporta-
tion Act of 1940. It contains this language:"It is hereby declared to
be the national transportation policy of the Congress to provide for
fair and impartial regulation of all modes of transportation subject
to the provisions of this act ... all to the end of coordinating,
developing and preserving a national transportation system by water,
highway, and rail as well as other means, adequate to meet the needs
of commerce of the United States, of the Postal Service and of the
national defense." While air carriers are not included, it is fair to
assume that in the near future, they too will be coordinated to this
broad policy.

ONE YEAR ENLISTMENTS.

It is being asserted with great vigor in all sections of the land, in-
cluding the nation's capital, that one-year enlistments coupled with
increased pay will bring such a volunteer response that conscription
would be unnecessary. Merely to document the matter, Major General
Adams, Adjutant General of the Army has advised Congress that one-year
enlistments are already authorized by law under the National Defense A
Act of 1920. He states however that "in recent years 1-year enlist-
ments have not been encouraged" on the ground that the turnover ham-
pers regular army training programs. This contention would not of
course apply if a training program was scheduled for but a single year
as is proposed by the conscription bill now before Congress. General
Adams also submitted a table of one-year enlistments to indicate that
short term enlistments were discouraged for the Regular Army since
that table shows that in the 9½ year period from 1931 to 1940 inclusive,
only 2093 persons were accepted for a one-year period.

BREAD AND BUTTER FOR THOSE WHO REMAIN BEHIND.

The National Defense Act of 1920 is one of the most all-inclusive
defense measures ever enacted by the Congress. Its purpose was to
develop a unified military system in this country which would embrace
the Regular Army, the National Guard, the Reserves and the unorganized
militia. The act fully covers all details such as pay and allowances
for those who serve in the military establishment but oddly enough, it
did not include provisions for extra allowances for the wives, child-
ren or other dependents of those who entered the service. The National
Guard mobilization bill recently enacted by Congress provided that
members of the Guard or Reserves who had dependents that were entirely
dependent on the wages or salary of such a member of the Guard or Re-
servers could apply and receive a discharge from service if he made
application within 20 days from the time he was ordered to duty. How-
ever, the human equation enters into the picture. Many who are subject
to service and who have dependents might not apply for a discharge so
that those left behind might find themselves in distressed circum-
stances while the bread winner was in the military service. To meet
this situation, the House adopted an amendment to the bill authorizing
the President to provide extra allowances for dependents. There will
be provision for those who might be left behind.
The nation's law books are studded with hundreds of statutes dealing
with benefits and compensation provisions for war veterans, their
dependents and widows and orphans of war veterans. Much of this
legislation deals with the kind and degree of proof that is required
before a veteran can obtain compensation for disabilities incurred
in the military service. This difficulty springs from the fact that
during previous wars, records of a veteran's condition when he enter-
ted the service, records of hospitalization and treatment during the
service, and records at the time of his discharge were lost or were
inadequate as a basis of proof. Every service officer of the Ameri-
can Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American
veterans, and every Congressman and Senator can testify to the vast
amount of time and energy that has been devoted to the problem of
proving that a veteran's condition is traceable to the service and
the difficulties which have been encountered in so doing. To meet
this situation in future military service by the National Guards, the
Reserve and other components which may be called to active duty,
Congressman Miller of Connecticut who lost both legs during the World
War while serving as an aviator and who attends congressional sessions
in a wheel chair, offered an amendment providing that every soldier
should be provided with a statement of his physical condition both
at the time of entry into and at the time of discharge from the service.
When the Military Affairs Committee of the House opposed the amend-
ment on the ground that it was unnecessary, Mr. Miller replied: "The
Veterans Administration spent 3 months trying to convince me that I
was in an infantry outfit when I never saw an infantry outfit at all."
The amendment was adopted. Strange echoes of the World War!

TO INFORM 130,000,000 PEOPLE.

Don't you wonder at times, just how folks got along several hundred
years ago when there were no books, newspapers, telephones, radios
and what not to keep people informed. In fact, only 100 years ago,
there were millions of folks who never got to read a newspaper. News
was still fresh if it was over six weeks old. Today we want news hot
off the wire or the air waves and some columns go so far as to claim
that they are presenting "tomorrow's news today." All of which leads
us to comment on the recent survey on communication in this country.
It indicates that we now have more than 14,000 newspapers, about
7000 periodicals and magazines, 247 book publishers, 17,000,000 tele-
phones, 19,200 telegraph printers, 8,878 commercial radio stations,
55,000 amateur radio senders, 44,000,000 radio sets, 100 motion
picture producers and 17,000 theatres from which we can get news, in-
formation, education, and entertainment by eye and ear. Standing on
the threshold is television whereby plays, pictures, events and
even the transmission of a newspaper page might come to every house-
hold in the land. We are not lacking in means of communication.