THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen
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IT IS A CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.

Little did we fancy in March of 1933 when the Congressional Front was first issued and named that someday it would truly become a congressional front. But so it is today as Congress meets in extraordinary session to consider the revision of the Neutrality Act of 1937. There are fronts and fronts. There is the Eastern Front and the Western Front. There is the Aerial Front and the Economic Front. There has been complaint that news from the various fronts has been censored and deleted to the point where the whole story is not told. To the publishers who so generously carry the Congressional Front in their publications and to those who read it, we here and now give a solemn pledge that whatever appears in the Congressional Front will not be censored or doctored. It will remain as non-partisan, as non-political, as free from bias and prejudice as human frailty will permit. Said the patriarch of old: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth will set you free." Justice is truth in action. We dedicate the Congressional Front in this anxious hour to the whole truth for therein lies the peace, the happiness and the security of our country.

WHERE LIES THE WAR MAKING POWER.

There have been many inquiries about the war making power in this country and we could do no better than to clarify this matter for all interested persons by quoting from the Constitution of the United States. Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution provides among other things that, "The Congress shall have the power .... to declare war." This is an exclusive power which resides only in the Congress and cannot be exercised by any other authority in the land.

BACKGROUND ON NEUTRALITY LEGISLATION.

Since the greatest interest is at this time manifest in the provision of the law which imposes an absolute embargo on the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition and implements of war to belligerent nations, the record vote in this matter in previous sessions will be interesting for purposes of accuracy. Congress first enacted neutrality legislation in 1935. The Bill was approved by the President on August 31, 1935. It contained a provision placing an embargo on the shipment of arms, ammunition and implements of war. The bill was known as Senate Joint Resolution 173. It passed the Senate without a record vote. It passed the House on August 23, 1935. The vote was 211 yeas, 83 nays and 136 not-voting. In 1937, Congress again voted on Neutrality. The vote came on Senate Joint Resolution No. 51 and contained a provision which placed an embargo on the shipment of arms, ammunition and implements of war. The Senate voted on this bill on March 3, 1937. The vote was: Yeas 63, Nays 6, Not-voting 26. This measure was considered in the House on March 18, 1937. The vote was: Yeas 376, Nays 13, Not-voting 42. The President signed this bill on May 1, 1937. That is the act which is now in effect. A third Neutrality Bill was submitted to Congress in June of 1939. That bill did not contain an embargo on the shipment of arms and ammunition. During the debate, an amendment was submitted by Representative Vorys of Ohio which made it unlawful to ship arms, ammunition and implements of war to any belligerent nation. The vote came on June 30, 1939. There were Yeas 214, Nays 173, Not-voting 42. Present 1. The bill was passed with the arms embargo provision in it on June 30, 1939. The vote on final passage was Yeas 200,
Navy 188, Present 1, Not-voting 41. This measure was then sent to the Senate where it was referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. On July 5, 1939, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations refused to consider the bill at that session of Congress by a vote of 12 to 11. Congress adjourned on August 8th, 1939. In January of 1937, Congress passed a resolution making the arms embargo applicable to the Civil War in Spain. The vote in the House was 411 Yeas, 1 Nay. Thus, Congress passed and the President signed two neutrality bills containing a mandatory embargo on the shipment of arms, ammunition, and implements of war. One house of Congress enacted an arms embargo for the third time and that measure is now pending in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

**THE SPECIAL SESSION.**

Under Section 3 of Article II of the Constitution, the President is empowered to call Congress into extraordinary session. That section reads as follows: "He (The President) shall from time to time give the Congress information of the State of the Union and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may on extraordinary occasions convene both houses or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper." During a special session, Congress may consider any legislation which it deems proper and expedient. In that respect it differs from a state legislature. When the Governor convenes a special session of the legislature, that body considers only such matters as have been set forth in the resolution which calls them together. In the case of Congress it may consider anything it chooses. The present disposition is to limit all discussion to the neutrality bill.

**THE MAIL.**

All members of Congress are fairly deluged with mail. There are letters, telegrams, post cards, petitions and signatures. It will take weeks to answer this heavy inundation of correspondence. Who is writing these communications? What do they say? The vast majority of these messages consist of letters and telegrams. They come from farmers, working folks, housewives, professional men, business men, teachers, lawyers, college professors. It reflects a cross section of America. Many of these letters are two and three pages in length. Sentiment as expressed in these communications is about 100 to 1 against lifting the embargo. What about other members? Members from Illinois, California, Rhode Island, Iowa, Michigan and other points report a similar deluge of mail containing about the same expression of opinion on the pending controversy.

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK.**

In the mail came a letter and on the envelope in large red letters was imprinted this sentiment: "Gee! It's Great To Be An American." Yes, it is great to be an American. It's great to enjoy the constitutional right as a citizen to tell men in public office how you feel about proposed legislation which may so vitally affect the destiny and welfare of this nation. As Americans in the spirit of America, we shall find the solution for our present problem.

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