

[Feb. 10, 1934]

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

IF THE BONUS WERE PAID the following amounts, would be paid into the various counties in the 16th district according to figures prepared by Mr. J.A. Shaw, Director of Veterans Employment Service of the Dept. of Labor: Bureau County \$800,207., Marshall County \$268,273., Peoria County \$2,911,686., Stark County \$189,190., Tazewell County \$949,289., Putman County \$107,841.

ARE THERE ANY BLIND folks in your neighborhood who cannot read this news letter. If so, would you be so kind as to direct their attention to the fact that the Congressional Library has been building up a separate library for the blind people in both the Braille and the Moon systems of reading for the blind. A uniform system of Braille for all English speaking countries has been developed and there is now available for folks whose sight has been lost, books on philosophy, religion, history, biography, poetry, language and many other subjects. This system of punched dots on heavy brown paper now makes it possible for our unfortunate neighbors to read Byrd's "Little America" Lodge's Life of George Washington, Parkman's Discover of the West, Wallace's epic story of Ben Hur and hundreds of other volumes. This office would be glad to assist. These books are available for mailing, to all parts of the United States.

ILLINOIS WATERWAY. According to the decree of the Supreme Court, the Sanitary District of Chicago must complete it's sewage treatment works on or before January 1st 1939 and that at that time, the amount of water which is withdrawn from Lake Michigan and used to dilute sewage so that it may flow into the Sanitary canal and then into the Illinois River will be reduced to 1500 cubic feet of water per second. This amounts to a substantial reduction in water and will affect the water level of the Illinois River. Accordingly, the War Dept. has prepared a plan for the building of three locks and dams to maintain the necessary nine foot depth minimum in the river. One dam will be built at Alton, Ill. on the Mississippi, one at Lagrange, Illinois and one at Peoria. These dams virtually divide the river into three pools, approximately 80 miles in length. The total cost will be about 15 million dollars, it is expected that the water level will be raised about three feet, and the channel will be widened from 200 to 300 feet. Construction shall be completed by January 1st 1939.

STATE DEPARTMENT APPROPRIATIONS. This Dept. under the leadership of Cordell Hull of Tennessee, Secretary of State looks after passports, foreign relations, treaties, and international affairs. The appropriation to operate the department for the next fiscal year will be 18 million dollars. This includes salaries for ambassadors and ministers, publication of state papers, expense of maintaining foreign posts, and international commissions on boundries, fisheries, claims waterways etc. The Dept. of Justice which supervises all Federal prisons and prison camps, district attorneys and marshals, territorial courts, defends claims against the United States, enforces anti-trust laws, customs and parole cases, the alcoholic beverage unit, pays fees to witnesses and jurors in Federal proceedings will receive 28½ million with which to struggle along for the next year. Incidentally, witnesses and jury fees cost Uncle Sam about 3 million dollars per year. The Dept. of Commerce which has jurisdiction over air fields and aeronautics, promotion of commerce and trade relations in other countries, the Census Bureau, steamboat inspection, the operations of the Bureau of Standards, the Bureau of Lighthouses, coastal surveys, the Patent Office, the Bureau of Mines and the Bureau of Fisheries has been awarded \$32 million dollars for the next fiscal year. Of this amount, salaries for those lonesome men who man the coastal lighthouses amounts to more than 1½ millions. The Dept. of Labor, over whose destinies the only woman cabinet member presides will receive \$12 million. The largest item of 8½ million in this Dept. goes to naturalization and immigration services.

GAG RULE. It's practical application will be seen with respect to the 1934 Revenue Bill. This bill will provide for a change in income taxes, ~~taxes~~, and for a continuation of taxes on estates, gifts, jewelry, candy, furs, stamp taxes, telephone and telegraph message and many other items. A tax of 5 cents per pound on coconut and sesame oil have been added. Under the gag rule, no amendments will be permitted from the floor. The result is that any effort to offer an amendment placing a high excise tax on imports of blackstrap, starch and other items in direct competition with the farmer will be deemed out of order, after the gag rule has been adopted. It is an important devise.

VETERANS WINE As this is written, the White House has yielded on three of the four major points in the American Legion program. Rightfully so, Of a 107 cases of insane soldiers in Illinois which came before the Review Boards, 91 were stricken from the rolls. It would be difficult to justify such action, in the name of economy or for any other reason.

SILVER. For 40 years, we have heard the demand for bimetallism - for free and unlimited coinage of silver at a fixed ratio to gold. Silver advocates are stronger now than in Bryan's time and will soon hold meetings of Senators and Representatives from 24 different states for the purpose of urging silver legislation at this session of Congress.

AIR MAIL INVESTIGATIONS have occupied the stage for months under the guidance of Senator Black of Alabama. In 1933, 20 million dollars was appropriated for air mail. Income from such mail was about 7 million. Therefore 13 million of public money was available to subsidize air mail contractors and induce them to continue such service until it had developed to a point where it would pay it's way. This huge sum made it possible to favor certain air mail lines and enable them to make huge profits. All this was disclosed in the investigation. The net result will be cancellation of existing air mail contracts.

OLD AGE PENSIONS. Twenty seven states now pay pensions to the aged. They vary as to age at which pension shall be paid, as to the amount of the pension, and as to the administration. The nation has become Old-Age-Pension conscious and a Resolution was adopted in Congress on Feb. 8th authorizing the Committee on Labor to study the possibilities of uniform pensions as a Federal matter. Within the next five years, all aged persons will be pensioned.

CAPITAL CAPERS. Chorus girls have been stabilized. Their code was approved yesterday whereby the minimum salary shall be \$25.00 per week. It is said that 6000 chorus girls are affected. The U.S. Minister to the capital of Paraguay needs a translator. The job pays \$228.00 per year. The Minister cannot secure a good translator for less than \$480.00 per year. Accordingly, the Minister cut the salaries of messengers, janitors, and other embassy employees sufficiently to make up the difference. Now comes the Comptroller General and says the salary of a translator cannot be raised because it amounts to an administrative promotion so the embassy will get along without a translator. Looks a bit silly. Thus far, 519,644 farmers in 35 states have signed up for the wheat acreage reduction program and have received \$43,716,794. Until now, reduction of cotton acreage has been voluntary. A bill now pends to make it compulsory. There is danger of too much cotton, even with a tremendous reduction in acreage. It is estimated that as result of the campaign since 1916 to eliminate black stem rust in wheat by the elimination of the barberry bush, the annual loss to wheat farmers has been reduced from 51 million bushels per year to 3 million bushels per year. In 1830, the population of Illinois was 157,445 - about the same number as Greater Peoria. In 1930 - 100 years later - the population was 7,630,654.