

[March 10, 1934]

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.  
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16th District.

WILD LIFE & OUTDOORS. MORE and more we are beginning to recognize the tremendous importance of the outdoors and of the conservation and restoration of wild life in America. We are beginning to see it as a playground for the future, when shorter days and shorter weeks will provide leisure that must be constructively exercised in healthful and interesting pursuits. Three bills to carry out the outdoor program as submitted to the President by a conference of conservationists were passed in the House this week. One provides for the establishment of fish and game sanctuaries and refuges in the national forests. Another provides for coordination between States and the Federal Government and all of the agencies of Government to promote conservation of wild life, fish and game. A third, commonly referred to as the Duck Stamp Bill provides that a stamp, costing one dollar, and procurable at any post office, must be purchased and affixed to the hunting license before a hunter is legally allowed to shoot migratory birds as defined by the Migratory Bird Treaty. In the Illinois Valley, that means ducks. It is estimated that 13 million hunters and fishers pay license fees and spend 650 million annually on outdoor recreation. Seventy five per cent of the money derived from "duck stamps" shall be used for purchase and administration and maintenance of sanctuaries, refuges, and breeding grounds.

IMMIGRATION. By the terms of a bill passed in 1926, immigration to the U. S. is substantially controlled by national quotas. It is known as the National Origins Act. Roughly it was determined that not to exceed 150,000 people should be permitted to come to the U. S. annually from other countries. Then the number of people of each nationality who were citizens of the U. S. in 1890 was determined. Then the ratio of each nationality to the whole number of our population was determined. This ratio or proportion is multiplied by the whole quota to be admitted in any one year and gives the number to be admitted from any one country with a minimum of 100. Consequently, under the proclamation made by the President, effective July 1st, 1933 there will be admitted to this country for the fiscal year, 25,957 from Germany, 65,721 from Great Britain, 17,853 from Irish Free State, 5,802 from Italy, 3,314 from Sweden, 1304 from Belgium, etc. This of course assumes that there will be more than that number who actually apply for visas to come to this country and can in other respects comply with the requirements for immigration. In strict fact, far less than the total quota number have actually applied during the last two years. The figures will show that we actually lost about 20,000 people last year. More people went out than came in. This fact is the basis for a bill now pending in the Immigration Committee, cutting the quota 60%. Other bills seek to put Canada, Mexico, and the south American nations on a quota basis. Other bills seek to completely shut off all immigration for the next ten years and so protect American labor. These bills are highly important in the light of the future development of this nation.

LOBBIES. A certain stigma attaches to the word lobby. There is a general impression that all lobbies are sinister, mercenary, selfish. Such is far from the truth. Take for instance the American Coalition of Patriotic Civic & Fraternal Societies. Strictly speaking it is a lobby. It represents about 100 organizations including War Mother, American Legion Auxiliary, American Defense Society, Daughters of the Confederacy, Reserve Officers Association, Immigration Study Commissions, Good Government Clubs etc. It is well organized. It's officers are able, competent and patriotic. Some have been generals and colonels in the service. They appear at all hearings involving matters of national defense, immigration naval affairs, veterans benefits and many other matters. They study and prepare data. They have no axes to grind. They ask no favors. They simply assume the right to appear before committees and testify. They exert no pressure. It can scarcely be said that an intelligent, unselfish, group whose only interest is to present facts, that would otherwise escape the attention of busy members, are a vicious kind of lobby. However, this must not be taken to mean that there are no lobbies in Washington, which skillfully seek to gain selfish ends because there are.

SOLDIERING AS A VOCATION. The finest youth of America, mentally alert and physically perfect is selected for entry to the U. S. Military Academy at West Point to train for the profession of a soldier. What are the prospects? Note these figures. Since and including the West Point graduating class of 1920, 2816 graduates have been commissioned in the Army. Of that number 1550 are still second lieutenants, 1266 are still first lieutenants.

The cadet who headed his class in 1920 is still 792 files removed from a Captaincy after 14 years of service. It is recorded with regret that in view of the intensive training and sacrifices that are made by those who take up an Army career, that our present system offers so little hope of a future.

YOUR ARMY. Yes, it's your army and my army. What does it do? What does it cost? How many officers and enlisted men does it contain? Here it is in concise form. Under the appropriations now made, your army will have about 1,186,750 enlisted men and 12,402 officers, 1,227 airplanes, 21,233 horses and of course, the usual ordnance and munitions. For the next fiscal year, your army will cost almost 280 million dollars. This is a decrease of 70 million from the previous year. You may be interested to know that it costs almost 2 million annually to train officers at West Point and that the average graduating class numbers about 285 men; that we spend over 26 million for the National Guard, and that it's worth it; that for the training of Reserve officers, the Citizens Military Training Camps for Boys, and for military instruction in schools and colleges, we spend 4 million annually, that we expend 22 million annually on the air corps; that the Army looks after 74 national cemeteries in the U. S. and eight in Europe; that it expends over 6 million annually in maintenance, operation and care of the Panama Canal.

AGE OF COMMANDERS. The present age of the Commanding officers of our army is coming in for considerable attention. On June 30, 1933, the average age of our major generals was 59.5 years; of brigadier generals, 60 years 4 months, of Colonels 58 years, of Lieut-Colonels 51 years, 7 months, of majors 44 years 8 months, of Captains, 42 years 7 months. There are 5,882 "active" list Reserve Officers, over age 50. In the Auxiliary Reserve of the Officers Reserve Corps is a major aged 86, and a second lieutenant aged 72; Compare this with the ages of some of our Civil War generals at the height of their capabilities. Sheridan was a general at 31, Mosby at 30, Stuart at 30, Grant at 40, McClellan at 36, Stonewall Jackson at 38. The demand for vigor and alertness in war, means that more and more attention will be directed to the age of those who are eligible for active commands. Changes will be suggested in the retirement provisions for officers in order to cure this condition and to permit speedier advancement for new entries into the army from our Military Academy.

COTTON. The introduction of the Bankhead Cotton Bill is a tacit admission that voluntary acreage reduction of cotton has failed despite the claim that 85% of the cotton growers signed up. This new bill seeks to make reduction compulsory by giving the Secretary of Agriculture authority to declare 60 days before any crop period, how many bales of cotton may be placed in interstate commerce, with a maximum of 10 million bales. The difficulty seems to have been that a law was found, making it necessary for the signer of a cotton-reduction contract to name his creditors in the contract and that checks were so drawn as to make the principal creditor a joint-payee. In some cases this creditor happened to be Uncle Sam to whom the grower was indebted for a seed and crop loan. When Uncle Sam or the private creditor cashed the check and took his share, there was little left for the grower. Besides, increase in cotton prices made pork, cornmeal and overalls double in price as an incidental inflation. With a 30% reduction many of the large growers dismissed their share-croppers and tenants so that it provoked unemployment and did not put the money in the hands of those who would expend it. There is growing resentment among tenants and share-croppers who are virtually destitute and the new proposal seeks to make reduction compulsory by keeping cotton off the market.

CABINET PERSONALITIES. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, age 62, born in Tennessee, lawyer, served in Spanish War; George Henry Dern, Secretary of War, age 62, mining engineer, inventor, former governor of Utah, born in Nebraska; Homer Stille Cummings, born in Chicago, age 64, lawyer, is Attorney General. Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, age 60, lawyer, born in Pennsylvania.