

#3. *April 1-1933*

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
(By Congressman Everett M. Dirksen)

Back in the Civil War days, some sentry coined the expression, "All is quiet on the Potomac." The expression has persisted, but the sentiment is momentarily inexact. Things are anything but quiet on the Potomac.

To date, the record of the present Congress has been the passage of the Emergency Banking Bill, the Economy Bill, the Farm Relief Bill (pending in the Senate) the Steagall Bank Bill, the Beer Bill and the Reforestation Relief Bill. During the ensuing weeks, there will be introduced as administration measures and considered by Congress, the Supervision of Securities Bill, the Transportation Reorganization Bill, the Emergency Bill for Refinancing of Farm and Home mortgages, the Public Works Construction Bill, and the Direct Relief to States Bill. This is a heavy program and of great moment to the country.

The so-called Reforestation Relief Bill gives to the President, the authority thru existing governmental agencies, to provide for employing citizens on work of a public nature in connection with reforestation on government or state lands, prevention of fires and floods, soil erosion, plant pests, the repair of paths, trails and fire lanes in national parks and forests and other work on the public domain. He is given further authority to provide for the housing, clothing, feeding and pay of such persons. To carry on this work, the President is empowered to enter into contracts with states, cities, counties and other public bodies and further empowered to acquire any necessary real property thru purchase, condemnation, donation or otherwise. The money to carry on this work shall come from the unobligated moneys heretofore appropriated for public works which have not yet been used or from projects on which actual construction cannot commence within 90 days.

While the bill does not recite the amount of pay, it leaves this to the President, and it is generally understood that the rate will be \$1.00 per day. The supervision of the act will come within the domain of the Secretaries of War, Interior, Agriculture and Labor. The machinery for its operation has not yet been set up, but the plan is to establish camps for the workers and pay their transportation to such camps. Transportation is therefore a considerable item, and it is quite likely that these unemployed in eastern cities who make application for these camps will be put to work in the forests of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas and other eastern states.

Oddly enough, Illinois is not listed as a part of the nine Forest Regions and, assuming that most of the money will be spent in the national domain and in state forests, the likelihood is that a very small portion of the funds will be expended in our state. If pursuant to such a plan, there is established a policy of employing those applicants who live closest to the proposed work, it will be of small benefit to our unemployed citizens. To that end, I offered an amendment, so that the project might embrace "the establishment of game preserves, sanctuaries for birds and wild fowl, the establishment of public hunting and fishing grounds on marginal lands along navigable watercourses, the propagation of fish, game and wild fowl." The amendment had a two-fold purpose. One was to further the cause of conservation and provide outdoor recreational facilities for the people along the Illinois River, and the other was to effect the spending of some of these millions of dollars in the state of Illinois, because the tax payers of Illinois must ultimately help pay for the cost of these camps. This amendment, like the many other amendments offered from the floor, was rejected. Inasmuch as the citizens of Illinois pay 1/17 of all the income taxes paid into the Federal Treasury by the 48 states, it is only fair and just that a proper amount of the expenditures for unemployment relief should be spent in Illinois for the benefit of the citizens of Illinois.

This week, the congressmen from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and other states, vitally interested in the Beshar's plan, will hold an informal caucus and devise ways and means of promoting one of the bills on this subject now in committee. There is reasonable hope that favorable action will be had. This week, there appeared in one of the Washington papers a statement by Dr. Egloff, noted chemist, to the effect that a gasoline-alcohol blend is not feasible or practical. The weight of Dr. Egloff's argument breaks down, however, when one observes that such a blended motor fuel has been used for years in 13 different countries and the further fact that Dr. Egloff is the chemist for a large oil company.

Personal glimpses: Today is the first real spring day in Washington. The cherry blossoms will soon shoot forth along the Potomac. These blossoms appear on a non-fruit bearing Japanese cherry trees that were given to the U.S. by the Japanese government in 1907. Many of these trees have since died.