

[June 9, 1934]

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.  
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NEPOTISM. Nepotism is the term applied to the carrying of relatives on the public pay roll. Every session of Congress, some Member takes up the cudgels against it and usually makes a newsworthy case. However, it has another side. Take the case of Congressman Pierce of Oregon, who was born in Grundy County, Illinois, went west as a boy, was elected governor of Oregon for two terms and is now a member of Congress. His wife, a gracious, personable lady of 60 or more years was State Librarian of Oregon for 20 years, built up one of the finest libraries in the United States, speaks Italian, French and German fluently, has travelled around the world, knows more about practical politics than her husband, looks after his diet, his shirts, and cuff links, knows every politician back home by his first name. It is common for mail to be addressed to Congressman Walter Pierce in care of Cornelia Pierce. She is a splendid testimonial to the importance and efficacy of wives in husband's careers. As a secretary to her husband, she is the superior of any two secretaries he could obtain in Washington. In that particular case, would anyone contend that there was anything vicious about Congressman Pierce having her on the payroll as his secretary?

STRIKES AND NUMBER OF PERSONS AFFECTED.

Year.	No. of strikes.	No. of persons involved.
1922	899	1,612,562
1923	1199	756,584
1924	898	654,641
1925	1012	428,416
1926	783	329,532
1927	734	349,434
1928	629	357,145
1929	903	230,463
1930	653	158,114
1931	894	279,299
1932	808	242,826
1933	1373	774,763
1934 (1st 4 months)	420	319,654.

TOBACCO PROGRAM. Step by step, the voluntary plan of crop reduction is being abandoned and supplanted with a compulsory plan. First came the Bankhead Bill, to establish a quota for cotton. In effect, it tells each farmer how much cotton he can produce and then imposes a 70% tax on all over that, if the farmer raises more than his quota and seeks to sell it. Penalty for evasion is a stiff fine and a chance to serve a prison sentence. Now comes the Kerr Bill applying the same principle to tobacco. The sponsors of the naively state that it is not compulsory but "any tobacco producer who refuses to reduce production must pay a tax of from 25 to 33-1/3% on the sale price of the tobacco which he sells. Virginia sun cured tobacco, cigar leaf tobacco, and Maryland tobacco are expected but these varieties are such a small proportion of the total production that for all practical purposes, this plan will apply to the tobacco industry generally. Next will come the Smith bill, now pending in the Senate, which if passed, will apply the compulsory principle to corn wheat, rice, hogs, cattle sugar beets and every other basic agricultural commodity.

CENSUS. There is a rule of procedure in Congress which provides that a bill which is on the calendar may be brought up for consideration and passage by a motion to suspend the general rules of the House for immediate consideration of such bill. If any member demands a second to the motion, the procedure is to debate the bill for 40 minutes and then vote on whether the rules shall be suspended. The majority and minority each get 20 minutes for debate. On the question of whether the rules shall be suspended, a two-thirds vote is necessary. It was under this procedure that a bill was called up to suspend the rules and pass a bill providing for a census of unemployment, employment, occupations, and agriculture as of November 12, 1934, just a few days after election. The work was to be done just before election. It provided for an expenditure of 10 million dollars. It was estimated to give employment to 100,000 people as enumerators for 2 weeks. Many Democrats voted against the bill and it failed to secure the necessary two-thirds. The same bill will now be brought up under a special rule whereby only a majority vote is necessary for passage. It is interesting to note that the 1930 general census cost 40 million dollars and was only completed about 6 months ago.

VETERAN INVESTIGATION. A resolution to investigate the administration of the estate of incompetent veterans by a special House committee was passed this week. It came to light that guardians, appointed by the courts or by the Bureau to look after the

estate of a veteran whose mind was shattered by the war, or after the war, were derelict in their duty and permitted such estates to be squandered or materially diminished; it came to light that where the funds of a veterans estate has been invested in good securities, trust companies, acting as guardians permitted the substitution of spurious and worthless securities for good securities and thus lost the estates of these helpless chaps who did their bit in 1917 and 1918. The investigation was staved off for a long time, but the matter has become very smelly indeed and at last, an investigation will take place to pin the responsibility on those who are to blame.

CHINCH BUGS. About 6:00 p.m. Wednesday June 6th, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee asked leave for immediate consideration of an emergency appropriation bill, authorizing the expenditure of 1 million dollars for chinch bug control and eradication in the 11 major corn producing states. Only 20 minutes of debate was indulged on the measure and when time came for it's passage, Representative Truax, Democrat from Ohio, and also candidate for U. S. Senator from Ohio arose and moved to amend the bill so as to "exterminate some of the bugs down in the Department of Agriculture." There was a big laugh, Rep. Truax, who was formerly Commissioner of Agriculture for Ohio, has little use for the theories and the program of Mr. Wallace.

BUNK AND BILLS. The Housing Bill is an excellent example of what loose talk and bunk can be indulged by many who have never taken the trouble to inform themselves. Last week, Floyd Gibbons, rapid-fire radio artist who affects a patch over one eye and who receives a nice fee for broadcasting for a large building material corporation took the trouble to criticize Congress for holding up the Housing Bill as soon as the President turned his back. A few newspaper columnists (whose stuff by the way always smacks of prejudice) said the same thing. It shows what misinformation can go forth when radio artists and columnists are too lazy or too indifferent to carefully wade thro a 40 page bill. The fact is that nobody objects the Housing idea. The fact is also that this bill contains a provision for setting up national mortgage associations with capital of not less than 5 million and with authority to issue bonds and debentures up to 15 times the amount of the capital stock for the purpose of financing home mortgages. That provision is dangerous. First of all, only cities like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago could find sufficient funds to set up such associations. Secondly, it furnishes a possibility of issuing 75 million in bonds against 5 million in capital, and dabbling in mortgages. Investors who got stung in such enterprises as the Strauss Co., the Girard Trust Co., and others know what possibilities of wild cat financing are contained in such a proposal. Finally, the bill provides for the insurance of Building & Loan mortgages on such a basis as to penalize good building and loan associations. The fact is that the Building & Loan League itself was the principal opponent of that provision as written. All of which proves that Floyd Gibbons and some of these columnists know as much about what's in the bill as a pig does about Sunday.

INTER-AMERICAN HIGHWAY. In March 1934 the President transmitted to Congress, a report on the proposed Inter-American Highway. It starts at Nuevo Laredo, Mexico (just on the border) and ends at Panama City, Panama. Total length is 3250 miles. It would go thro Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala. At the lowest point, elevation would be sea level; at the highest point about 4000 feet above sea level. Points of interest along this route would be the ancient Mayan ruins, mountain lakes, tropical jungles, volcanoes, hunting and fishing grounds. It would become a transportation artery for coffee, bananas, oranges, custard-apples, cherimoyas, sapodillas, mangosteen, papayas, rice, minerals, handicraft products. There is only one drawback. They expect Uncle Sam to furnish the machinery, labor, material and foot the entire bill.

PRAYERS. The rules of the House provide that each legislative day shall begin with prayer. Under the "gag-rule" recently adopted, the House recesses each day instead of adjourning so that under the rule, while it may be the 11th of June, it is still the legislative day of June 4th. Therefore for several days, there have been no prayers. It is amazing how refreshing it is to start each work day with a beautiful prayer and how many members miss the inspiration of such prayer. But such is the strange effect of a "gag-rule."