

Observations on Congress From an Inside Viewpoint

By Harris Ellsworth, M.C.,
4th District of Oregon

The operation of the House of Representatives is largely dependent upon the efficient and intelligent action of the legislative committees. Apparently, the entire legislative process was considerably improved by the reorganization bill and adopted by the 80th Congress. The principal improvement was the reduction of the number of committees by more than half and by providing each committee with a very high grade staff.

Representatives Charles A. Wolverton of New Jersey, who is chairman of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, on which I am serving, has adopted two procedural policies which are not only brand new in the history of Congress, but which, in my opinion, should be adopted by all of our committees.

The first and the most important of the two innovations is the closed meeting sessions of the committee with the heads of agencies and departments whose legislation is under our jurisdiction. A full day is allotted to each such meeting. The department and agency heads thus have an opportunity to become acquainted with the members of the committee, and the members of the committee have an opportunity to hear a full statement of the work of the agency, and in several cases, the agencies have suggested legislation. Thus far, we have met with the Federal Communications Commission, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and the Civil Aeronautics Administration. Next week we will interview the Federal Security Agency, the Securities Exchange Commission, the Railroad Retirement Board, and some bureau heads from both the Interior Department and the Department of Commerce.

The second innovation is one that is of particular interest to the members of Congress, but which is important in the legislative process. Each Monday, all members of the House who have introduced bills which have been referred to our committee are invited to appear before the committee and explain their bills. These appearances are brief, but adequate for the purpose of the record and for the information of the committee. Heretofore, members have had no such opportunity. I hope other committees will adopt the same system.

One of the outstanding characteristics of this 80th Congress is the large number of members who have served in the armed forces. Nearly half of the members of each house are veterans, many having served in two wars. Thirty-six senators are list-

as veterans, 28 of World War I, five of World War II, one Spanish-American and even one who fought in the Boer War. One senator was in both the Spanish-American and first World wars.

In the House of Representatives, 200 members have seen service. Four are Spanish War vets; one of whom also was in World War I. Fourteen of the 118 who served in the first World War saw further service in the Second. Fifty-eight others are veterans of World War II.

Annual competitive examinations for appointment to the U. S. Coast Guard Academy will be conducted by the U. S. Civil Service Commission May 7th and 8th. Unmarried young men between 17 and 22, military or civilian, are eligible on meeting educational requirements.

Candidates intending to take the examination should write to the Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard, Washington, D. C., before April 1st to make arrangements for the examinations. I shall be glad to send full information and regulations to any who are interested.

If a turkey weighs 14 to 17 pounds dressed, cook it at a temperature of 275 degrees Fahrenheit. Allow 5 to 6 hours.

Condemned Negro Gets Third Execution Stay

HONOLULU, March 13. — President Truman has ordered a third and indefinite stay of execution for Pfc. Carlton Mickles, 19-year-old St. Louis Negro, who was sentenced by a military court to hang for the rape of a war department civilian employee on Guam.

Mickles was sentenced to hang Jan. 20, but the execution was postponed twice previously at the request of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The third stay also came as a result of a request by attorneys of the association who are investigating the case.

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Mt. McKinley, highest peak on the North American continent, rises abruptly to 17,000 feet from a plateau less than 3,000 feet high.

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