



Washington, D. C., Sept. 30.— One of the new rackets by some citizens and slick lawyers continues while congress is attempting to curb them. This racket is the "informer" by which a "citizen" or lawyer, who knows nothing about an attempt to defraud the government brings a civil suit knowing that under an old law, passed in 1865, he will receive 50 percent of the judgment. At this time there are 35 such suits and they involve millions of dollars. Two suits of this character have been filed against a western railroad and an oil company for a sum representing \$1,200,000,000.

The department of justice is asking a curb on these racketeers, for on the floor of the senate the activity of these lawyers has been called a racket. It started back in January, this year, when the supreme court upheld a judgment for \$315,000. The so-called "informer" received half the money under the law. But it is declared that the "informer" contributed nothing to the case; he had simply copied the indictment which had been drawn by the department of justice.

Recently there was testimony before the Truman committee that a certain war contract firm has chiseled the government. The department of justice investigated and found the testimony was insufficient to bring a suit. However, based on newspaper reports of the Truman committee testimony, three different people in the mid-west filed suit. Beyond the newspaper reports they knew nothing.

The senate is attempting to change this ancient law and proposals have been made to reduce the "informer" cut from 50 percent to 25 percent, or even 10 percent. Even a 10 percent slice of a judgment for a few million dollars would not be "hay." On the other hand, there is a desire to retain sufficient features of the old act to enable a person who by his own investigation has "something" on an alleged crooked war contractor and yet at the same time discourage the racketeers.

As the situation stands, any war contractor can be sued by an "informer" if some witness tells the Truman or other investigating committee that the such-and-such ship building company of Puget sound or Columbia river horn-swoggled the government. The tanker "Schenectady", which split and sank at the outfitting dock in

**OUR DEMOCRACY** ————— by Mat

**"CARE SAVES WEAR"**

SHOES WERE RATIONED WHEN OUR COUNTRY WAS FOUNDED—NOT BY STAMPS BUT BY NECESSITY. IT TOOK 3 DAYS TO MAKE A SERVICEABLE BUT CLUMSY PAIR—A WEEK'S WAGES TO BUY THEM. PEOPLE WERE CONSIDERED LUCKY WHO HAD A PAIR A YEAR.



SHOES ARE BEING RATIONED TODAY SO THAT OUR ARMED FORCES CAN BE WELL SHOD. WE WILL HAVE ENOUGH TO GO AROUND.... ITS UP TO US TO TAKE CARE OF SHOES—KEEP THEM IN REPAIR.



SHOES ARE WAR EQUIPMENT FOR OUR MILLIONS OF MARCHING FEET; — WE MUST USE LEATHER FRUGALLY.

the Vancouver-Portland area after its test run, is now the subject of an "informer" suit against the Carnegie - Illinois Steel corporation which supplied the steel, in which the "informer" writes Senator Langer he hopes to recover \$25,000,000 for the government.

Northwest members of congress are hopping mad over the so-called shortage of wood fuel in Washington, and Oregon. They can't see eye to eye with OPA's Joe Dean, national fuel administrator who predicts a critical wood and coal fuel shortage this winter for the northwest. Mr. Dean cites the manpower shortage as the real factor behind the coming fuel shortage. The many lumber mills of the northwest which are operating at capacity have truckloads of slab wood, mill ends and sawdust stacked around their plants waiting for customers. Many of these mills are located very close

to the larger population centers in both states, hence, the train, truck or barge haul in many cases would not be over 50 miles, and seldom more than 100 miles.

While the lawmakers admit transportation facilities are not always ample to move this fuel to the larger cities on schedule, they can't see the critical shortage angle advanced as advanced by Mr. Dean. They also argue that there is enough available manpower to do the transportation job if OPA would adjust the price ceiling on wood fuel. Fuel dealers would then be in position to absorb the additional transportation costs and ample fuel would be available for every home. By the tone of the letters received here lawmakers can't see why a fuel shortage when the northwest is chock-full of wood.

National postwar planning, now in the lap of congress, has many

wrinkles which will have to be ironed out before the bugle blows cease firing. The one big wrinkle in any postwar plan is labor costs. Most everyone agrees that industry will not be able to return to the pre-war wage level for labor. On the other hand, industry can't be expected to pay boom war-time wage scales, and that's where the unions come into the picture. Labor unions now have the largest membership ever attained and millions of dollars in their treasury. They will battle any move which would reduce the hourly wage of any craft; and on the contrary may even ask for more money. Unions now hold closed shop contracts with many lines of industry which will be in effect after the war. Wage increases have been written into these contracts and also into federal and state wage-hour regulations. Therefore, any national postwar planning act will have to contain an average hourly wage rate close to the current rate of hourly pay, think the lawmakers. Naturally the revision of any and all postwar wage scales will be downward, and that's the big wrinkle to be ironed out.

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