

The Nurses Have Not Lagged Behind

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S request to Congress to draft nurses for military service and the subsequent misunderstanding and misinformation have created the impression that nurses have failed to volunteer for war service.

Actually, the record of Army and Navy nurses for voluntary enlistment is extraordinary. The record for the Army Nurse Corps shows that there were 955 members in 1940. As of today, it has been expanded to more than 46,000 members. These are all volunteers. The Navy Nurse Corps is close to filling its quota of 11,500 members. These, too, are volunteers. Rep. Frances P. Bolton, of Ohio, author of the Bolton Bill creating the United States Cadet Nurse Corps, has pointed out that "a higher percentage of nurses has volunteered for military service than any other skilled or professional group, with the possible exception of doctors. Seventy-five thousand of our 274,405 active graduate, registered nurses have applied for service. Fifty-seven thousand of these are or have been serving in the Army or Navy. This glorious record of voluntary service should be recognized by the War Department and the American public."

The War Department, which insisted upon the draft, delayed too long to authorize its Medical Department to assign a bare minimum of personnel to the recruiting drive. Volunteers of the American Red Cross are relied on for recruiting and processing. Rep. Walter H. Judd, of Minnesota, a physician who has a vast experience with Chinese troops, asks, "How do we know the voluntary system has failed, since it hasn't had a chance to work? The War Department has reason to explain why it has given little support and no appropriation to the nurse-recruitment drive while implying through its demand for a draft that the voluntary method has failed. On the other hand, to secure less than 100,000 Wacs, the Army has spent more than \$3,000,000 of Government funds for publicity and advertising; more than \$10,000,000 have been contributed by generous advertisers throughout

the nation for the same purposes; and some 3800 personnel are assigned to recruiting duty."

Certainly no one has a right to conclude from recent discussion of the draft that nurses are laggards. Advocates of the draft of nurses made no such unjust charge, but have been led to believe that voluntary enlistment, splendid as it has been, would not produce the nurses needed by the Army and Navy. Perhaps it wouldn't, but the record of nurses at Anzio, Corregidor, in France, Germany, India, China—wherever our troops are—is a record of daily heroism by nurses who chose to be where they are. No law compelled them.

The to-do over the nurse draft has taken attention from many things which civilians can do to make it easier for nurses to enter Army or Navy service. For one thing, civilians can relieve some of the home-front pressure on nurses by relaxing demands for private special nursing and by organizing such plans as that adopted in Hartford, Connecticut, where every application for a "special" must be reviewed by a committee of doctors. Hospital authorities can help by insisting that special nurses be available for ward duty whenever the care of their patients boils down to arranging flowers, reading aloud or playing cribbage. Thoughtful community planning for the dwindling resources of medical care will be necessary anyway.

Obviously, the first consideration is to get nurses to our sick and wounded men. If the draft is needed to accomplish that, particularly when mounting Pacific casualties strain our resources to the limit, we must accept that fact. Nevertheless, the public is entitled to ask why nurses, who have volunteered, in proportion to their numbers, far beyond the record of any other group, were prematurely singled out for conscription, unless that policy was to be part of a draft for all women war workers, Wacs, Waves, Spars, and all the rest. Unless that is the intention, our heroic nurses have good reason to feel that American officialdom, at any rate, has not understood one of the outstanding voluntary achievements of this war.

THE SATURDAY EVENING

POST



THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY
CYRUS H. K. CURTIS, President, 1883-1932

BEN HIBBS • EDITOR

ROBERT FUOSS • MANAGING EDITOR

MARTIN SOMMERS • FOREIGN EDITOR
FORREST DAVIS • WASHINGTON EDITOR

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

E. N. BRANDT **ARTHUR W. BAUM**
STUART ROSE **HARLEY P. COOK**
W. THORNTON MARTIN **ROBERT MURPHY**
DEMAREE BESS **WARNER OLIVIER**
JACK ALEXANDER **EDGAR SNOW**
FREDERIC NELSON **MARION DERRICKSON**
WESLEY PRICE

DAY EDGAR • ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR

KENNETH STUART • ART EDITOR
FRANK KILKER • ASSOCIATE ART EDITOR
R. F. GARLAND • PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

PHILADELPHIA 5, PA. • • • • • APRIL 28, 1945

Was Man Made for the Sabbath, or the Other Way Round?

AT the height of the food controversy, Robert Conway, ace reporter for the New York Daily News, decided to find out what was up by the simple expedient of going to Canada and bringing back some of Canada's reputed 290,000,000 pounds of meat. Several things have happened since this new version of Conway's Cabal, but it makes a fascinating story nevertheless. Arriving in Canada, Mr. Conway bought four steaks, ration free, and boarded a plane for New York. Among the other passengers was a Canadian lady who was on her way to visit her sister in the States and had brought along a fitch of bacon to make herself less of a burden on the family ration books.

To make a long story, as Jane Ace would phrase it, neither Mr. Conway nor the Canadian lady was allowed to get away with their dastardly plot to increase the meat supply of the United States. For the steaks, OPA and United States Customs authorities demanded 200 red points, which, of course, Mr. Conway did not possess. He offered to give the four steaks to the Government, but was rebuffed. He was not permitted to sell the steaks to somebody who had the required points because he had "brought it in as a duty-free gift for his own consumption." Nor could Mr. Conway pay the customs duty because he was not a licensed importer of meat. The Canadian lady was off limits too. She was asked to surrender points for her bacon in spite of the fact that, as a foreigner, she had no American ration book.

Such buffoonery might be expected to lead to reform, but some of the statements assigned by Mr. Conway to OPA officials on this case of U. S. vs. Beefsteak, et al., explain in part why an American food-distributing agency found additions to the food supply so repulsive. One official told Mr. Conway that imports from Canada were being discouraged because "if Canada builds up an American meat business, pressure will be brought after the war to continue meat trade with the United States, and this would not meet with the favor of packers and the farm bloc!" Another said that "it would hurt morale if one person saw a neighbor with a juicy Canadian steak."

Before reader apoplexy sets in, it will be well to note that Mr. Conway never did say what became of his steaks or the Canadian lady's bacon.

Dubious Citizen Sat Out the Whisky Rebellion of 1945

THE coming of spring lured that Unsavory Character of our acquaintance away from his perch by the oilstove in the back room of the billiard parlor and out into communication with us. Naturally, we asked him how he had spent the late curfew and for any observations that might occur to him.

"To tell you the truth," said the Unsavory Character, "I went underground, joined the nonresistance movement. I haven't been in one of those cafés or chili joints since the Big One stopped racing. In former days, I would pick up the Racing Form at the railroad station when it came in on the 11:27 train in the evening, and then I would adjourn to a little place I knew where you could get maybe a glass of beer and a ham on rye bread no lettuce very little butter and some of the hot mustard. There was no juke box in the place and it was the McCoy just to sit there with the Form and work out something for the next day at one of the tracks. The manager was a sucker for the nags, too, and we'd have many a hot argument. You know: how much to rate class over form—that kind of stuff. It doesn't seem like there is the incentive to sharpen the intellect like there used to be.

"But you were asking about the curfew. Well, I haven't been in that place since Jimmy Byrnes decided we were fighting the war to keep the common man out of the common saloon. After all, it's bad enough being forced by Federal fiat to confine your horse research to what is running at speculative parks like Havana and Mexico City, without being thrown out of the place at midnight. So, like I just said, I haven't been out in café society since It Happened. It suited me better just to go to bed and catch up with my reading on Dumbarton Oaks. If that puts you to sleep, maybe you'll dream the Dumbarton Oaks was a mile-and-seventy-yard jog for two-year-old fillies, like it ought to be if language meant anything any more.

"If you ask what I think of the curfew in general, the answer is I think about it as little as possible. I did see where Mayor Butch LaGuardia over in New

York looked at the thermometer one day and saw it stood at the unseasonable mark of eighty-seven degrees. He decided Jimmy Byrnes didn't need to save any more coal this year and put on a curfew of his own, closing 'em up at one A.M. That was the beginning of the tempest in a bar glass that rocked the nation. Now, I am no great admirer of The Hat because he is the kind of Bluenose what would snatch a slip of paper off a little child sent by his mother to give the feller at the fruit stand a bet in the three-o'clock race. But I did think the people of the nation would give a loud cheer for any mayor, however disagreeable, who would strike a blow for liberty, even if it was confined to an hour in the early morning when most people have hit the hay and can enjoy freedom and democracy only by dreaming that there was any.

"On the contrary, the public ignored the principle involved and lambasted the mayor all over the lot, like as if he had agreed to let Hitler sit in the Stork Club and have his picture taken knocking off a vegetable-juice cocktail. Whereupon the Government—and mind you, all this started out trying to save coal—ordered the MP's to snag out any soldiers and sailors who might be in a juke-box joint after twelve. So it turned out that Jimmy Byrnes, who started out to make the home front know there was a war on, ended the argument by making the soldiers know they might as well have stayed in Camp Dix. The Judge quit after that. I don't say he couldn't stand the sight of G.I.'s pressing their noses to the windows of joints wherein profiteers was regaling themselves, but you or I couldn't have took it.

"So I don't think I done so bad to stay away from it. There's no percentage in taking a couple fingers of what the Good Book says you need for your stomach's sake, not if you got to do it in the midst of a Constitutional controversy. Maybe by sticking around and making a test case of myself instead of a retired horse player, I could have got into the history books as the Caucasian Dred Scott of the twentieth century. But I'm not much of a one for notoriety. If the Constitution is threatened, I'll get out there with my .45 and shoot it out with 'em, any time, anyplace, but somebody else got to save democracy by sitting up all hours in a night spot, now that the Morning Telegraph ain't got nothing to study but this Good Neighbor racing."