

# CALLING ALL NURSES

A new housing project near a certain military camp accommodates 4,000 civilian camp workers and their families. When, last October, the fort's medical staff announced they could no longer care for the community, an attempt was made to get a civilian doctor to relocate there. None could be found. The community, therefore, remembering that the Lord helps those who help themselves, gathered together some money they had from selling concessions, and certain Army Emergency Relief funds available to them, induced the post commandant to move over a prefabricated house to use as an

people need help, what can I do?" nurses perform meet emergency situations as they arise.

The community I have described is still trying to get a relocated doctor. Meantime, the nurses carry on.

Their unusual story dramatizes the long hours jam-packed with hard work which nurses in practically every hospital and health service in the land are putting in to see that the sick and injured are cared for, in spite of personnel shortages.

Their story points, further, to the hundreds and even thousands of married nurses, some of them comfortably retired for a quarter of a century, who are brushing up their techniques and returning to their professions "for the duration."

Finally it shows how the war shortage in health services, in which nursing plays so important a part, can best be met when the entire community puts its shoulder to the wheel and cooperates with the professional workers.

Even before Pearl Harbor the nation had far too few nurses. The number of people cared for in hospitals had been growing steadily and rapidly. With higher incomes, Mr. and Mrs. John Q. Citizen were having those long-postponed operations performed. More women were working, making it harder to fight through Johnnie's measles at home. Subscribers in group insurance payment plans were increasing by leaps and bounds (there were 11,070,-



Through powerful binoculars student nurses watch a delicate eye operation in the room below. This dome arrangement is a unique development in amphitheatres for operation observations

Emergency Nurses' Aide Station, and advertised for nurses in the post newspaper.

Two Army officers' wives who were experienced graduate nurses came forward and were hired to "man" the station. During the last month for which statistics are available, these two nurses saw 900 ailing people, 366 of them in their homes. Forty-five of these calls were made in the dead of night. In only twenty instances was a doctor called—secured with no end of difficulty from a neighboring town where the medical personnel is greatly overworked caring for another mushroomed area.

Nurses themselves do not advocate such procedures. They acknowledge that nurses are trained to work under the direction of a doctor, and should not prescribe. Nevertheless, like the pharmacist dealing out medicines in a doctorless community who said, "I may go to jail for this, but when the

Official OWI Photos by Henle



Nursing answers the impulse in every woman to serve her fellow men. Here a student nurse takes care of an oxygen-tent patient

INDEPENDENT WOMAN

**The drive is on to enroll 65,000 students in nursing schools this year. They must replace nurses needed on our fighting fronts . . . And if our own communities are to be ready for possible enemy attacks, disasters or epidemics, retired nurses must return to work, and more aides trained**



Helmeted United States nurses at a port in Africa, waiting for a train to take them to their assigned posts near combat areas. More than 61,000 nurses are needed this year for the armed forces

Wide World

000 of them at the beginning of this year), doubtless bringing hospital care within the realm of possibility for many who could not previously afford it. And as more people went to hospitals, more nurses were needed to care for them. Meantime, as more communities became aware of the good to be realized from public health nursing services, the demand grew for public health nurses.

**T**hen the war came. Military forces of unprecedented size require an unprecedented number of nurses. The Army and Navy Nurse Corps, totaling 1,600 in 1940, must be built up to 61,000 by the end of 1943, authorities tell us, because, naturally, in wartime, nursing care for the armed forces takes first place.

The sudden withdrawal of so many workers from a profession that has an estimated total of only 259,000 active members, is bound to leave home services short-handed. The situation is, indeed, so serious in many communities that the nurses are earnestly seeking (and in some places already are receiving) the cooperation of such groups as the Business and Professional Women's Clubs in solving this vital war woman-power problem.

What can you, as a member of the Business and Professional Women's Club of your community, do to help meet the emergency?

By far the most important help which any organization can give to the nursing profession in this war emergency, is in the recruitment of student nurses. Sixty-five thousand nurses should enter the nation's 1,300 schools of nursing during the school year beginning June 1st, and a nation-wide campaign has been launched to inform the girl who is finishing high school, or ending a year of college, with the determination to become immediately useful in the war effort.

Many young women look to members of Business and Pro-

fessional Women's Clubs for advice about the work they should enter. The nursing profession hopes that you will tell them what a basically significant war service they render almost as soon as they enter a school of nursing—because the care they give actual patients under supervision helps to release graduate nurses to join the Army or Navy Nurse Corps.

The nursing profession hopes you will explain to the girls, also, that nursing is war work with a future. This is an important point to make. Severe competition has been set up for the services of the young woman with a high school diploma and good grades—the kind of young woman the nursing profession must have. If she lives near a plant engaged in war industry, she can get a job that pays her well. If she wants to join the WAACs, WAVES, Marines, SPARS, et cetera, she will receive a soldier's pay even during training—and Uncle Sam provides a glamorous uniform.

Nurses, on the other hand, must usually pay their own tuition and personal expenses during two or three years of training—training for the hardest and most heart-breaking service war demands of women.

**N**urses have, to be sure, the satisfaction of knowing they are the first women to reach the front lines. There is thrill as well as grave responsibility in flying from India with five wounded fighting men in your charge as Elsie Ott recently did. And the newly designed Army Nurse uniforms can match any in glamour.

Yet the attractions of military service may seem a long way off to the young woman just entering a school of nursing. Meanwhile the financial inequities under which she labors are very real. To mitigate them, Representative Frances Payne Bolton of Ohio recently introduced into the House of Representatives, and Senator Josiah W. Bailey into the Senate, bills to provide government stipends to students of nursing who agree to serve wherever they may be needed during the war.

These bills, which now await hearings from the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and from the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, would establish "a student war nursing reserve" which has been under considera-

*By Josephine Nelson*



tion for the past year, sometimes under the name of the Victory Nurse Corps. Under the measure, students enrolling for the student war nursing reserve would receive their training at government expense, their schools being reimbursed for their tuition by the United States Public Health Service. The estimated cost of training for a student for twenty-four months is \$1,230, and for thirty months, \$1,250. To become eligible, students must agree to do military or essential civilian nursing during, and for six months after, the war.

Speaking in behalf of the measure, Representative Bolton said, "Education of student nurses should be financed by the federal government as a war emergency measure, like the education of other essential professional and technical students."

According to the Subcommittee on Nursing of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, "The problem has been given careful consideration during recent months by the hospital authorities and the professional nursing organizations in consultation with the government agencies concerned. The plan which has been developed meets with the approval of the hospital and the nursing groups, and has been endorsed by representatives of the Army, Navy and Public Health Service and the Health and Medical Committee of the ODHWS."

Whether the measure passes or not, *the nation must have more nurses.*

Stepping up from 44,000 the year before, a quota of 55,000 new students was set for 1942-43. The number who actually began nursing educations was 6,000 short of the goal, in spite of widespread effort. That is some indication of how hard it is going to be to enroll 65,000 this next year. Yet 65,000 is not an estimate of the actual shortage to be filled, but only a goal that it is thought possible to reach. Actual vacancies are far more numerous, and the slack must be taken up by the use of more Red Cross Nurse's Aides and other auxiliaries.

**E**ven without government stipends, there are real arguments in favor of nursing as a life work. In the first place, while many types of war workers will be looking for new jobs when peace comes, the nurse will continue to be in great demand. Post-war opportunities are indicated by the expanding public health field, and by the growing emphasis on prevention of disease. How great is the need for both is indicated by the high percentage of rejections for military service

because of physical defects. In an article in the February *Modern Hospital*, Dr. Hugh Cabot predicts greatly expanded responsibilities for the post-war nurse.

At least some American nurses will doubtless be required to help rebuild war devastated areas. Many will, unhappily, be engaged in caring for our own war casualties which are already expanding veterans' hospitals. One official recently stated that we must be prepared to care for at least a million war wounded. The trend toward expanding civilian hospitals that began before the war will doubtless continue after it is over.

Nursing offers a real advantage in that it is work in which women are wanted for the top jobs. While there is just complaint with some of the pay offered nurses at the outset (women's groups might well help to effect whatever readjustment is needed in their own communities), there are never enough women qualified to fill the six or seven thousand dollar positions at the top. With a first-class nursing education as a foundation, a girl of unusual ability can practically name her own ticket in the way of an administrative post in a public

agers, secretaries and stenographers.

Furthermore, nursing is a humanly satisfying profession. For women, it answers the deep-seated and highly important impulse in every woman to be of service to her fellow men.

**F**inally, a nursing education does not merely train a girl to *earn*, it also trains her to *live*. While learning the technical aspects of such complexities as intravenous injections and sulfa drugs, a nurse is also taught baby care, nutritional wisdom, how to make sick people comfortable, and how to keep well people well. What better training for a home maker? More and more young women are thinking it natural and right to prepare both for a career and for marriage and the raising of a family, and they'll be honestly interested to learn that the marriage rate is higher among nurses than among women of any other profession.

Not every young woman, to be sure, is fitted for nursing. Nursing requires certain human qualities as well as high scholastic rating. For specific facts about requirements and schools, won't you please confer with your local Nursing Council for War Service? Or, the National Nursing Council for War Service, 1790 Broadway, New York City, will be glad indeed to mail a copy of an informational folder, "War Work With a Future — Nursing" to any club's War Worker Recruiting Station, or to any member who is doing vocational counseling among young people.

The nursing problem in a nation at war has other aspects besides increasing the student body. Because they are already organized for, and often well versed in, constructive work for community welfare, Business and Professional Women's Clubs can give enormous impetus to the effort, now being carried out everywhere in the country, to enlist graduate nurses in the Red Cross First Reserve from which members of the Army and Navy Nurse Corps are drawn.

In embarking upon such an effort, however, it is important to keep in mind the needs of the home front. Military requirements must be filled. If the 61,000 goal is to be achieved by the year's end, recruitment must continue at the rate of about 3,000 a month. Yet nurses for military service must be secured without robbing your community of—let us say—its public health nurse who may be helping hundreds, or even thousands, to keep well and stay on the job. It probably would be unpatriotic to send off to war the administrator

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#### FEDERATION PROGRAM IN JUNE ISSUE

**I**NDPENDENT WOMAN for June is the *Program Issue*—which means that it is **YOUR PROGRAM BOOK** for Federation club work during 1943-44. In it you will find—simply and explicitly outlined for your convenience—the Federation's two-fold program of study and activities for: 1—Winning the War, 2—Winning the Peace. It is *your* program, developed from suggestions contributed from clubs and individual members of clubs all over these United States, to do with what you wish. It is not expected that all clubs can—or will wish to—carry it through in its entirety, but rather that, from among the projects, individual clubs will select those which best suit their membership and the conditions with which they have to work. *Watch for it—Read it—Adapt it—Act on it.*

health agency, with its wide-spread contacts and community planning, or in an institution or school of nursing. Incidentally, a study which the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs made among its own members in 1936 showed the median salary of nurses to be higher than that paid to librarians, teachers, office man-

conferences on postwar planning, groups of women all over the country are meeting to discuss, or to do some organizing of their own with respect to the kind of postwar world in which they wish to live.

During the past month, the Federation was invited to send representatives to no less than three meetings called for the purpose of lining up women for an organized attack upon the problems of winning the peace. Since the winning of the peace constitutes Part II of our two-fold Federation program for this year, the Federation was naturally only too glad to comply.

Representatives of the Federation were, therefore, at the meeting at which the National Committee on The Cause and Cure of War voted to go out of existence and henceforward throw in its strength with the newly-organized Women's Action Committee for Victory and Lasting Peace.

They were present at the meetings at which the Committee on Participation of Women in Postwar Planning effected its organization and laid down its objectives. They were present at the afternoon and evening meetings of the twelve women called together by the New York Times to answer the question, "What Kind of a World Do We Want?" They are, therefore, in a position to assure you that, if the spirit and the declared intentions of those present are any criterion, women are not only ready to travel the old familiar road but are already well on their way.

#### A Last Minute Reminder

**B**arring swift and decisive action by Congress, the Trade Agreements Act will expire next month. We bring this up now because discussion of reciprocal trade agreements has for so long occupied a prominent place on club programs, and because the Federation is committed by its legislative program for this year to "the principle of international organization so that disputes that now lead to war can be settled by pacific means."

Continuance of our country's present arrangements with friendly nations is held by many students of international relations to constitute one of the most powerful safeguards against disputes which now lead to war. Reciprocal trade agreements, and the improvement of

world trade, it is held, must underlie all post-war planning. One of the goals of the Atlantic Charter, we are reminded, is the furtherance of "access of all nations, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity." We are invited to consider the concern with which our friends—and likewise our enemies!—view a possible lapse of the existing act. The fervency with which our enemies are hoping and praying that it will be allowed to lapse, and the equal fervency with which our friends are hoping and praying that it

will be retained, looks to us like a significant tip as to where our interests must necessarily lie.

Furthermore, we are told by numerous authorities, that continuance of the present arrangements is necessary to the successful prosecution of the war. Highly important to American industries turning out war materials are Latin American copper, bauxite, tin, lead,

zinc, manganese, mercury, nitrate, balsa wood, mahogany, quinine. Latin American countries are increasing their productive capacities, developing new highways and other means of transportation, reorganizing their whole economic life to furnish us with goods necessary to our effort. And why? Because this will create a market for their products in the United States. Shall we, ask the experts, allow ourselves to be placed in a position which will oblige us to tell them that our policy when the war is over will be one of a closed, or tightly protected, market? Before the war broke, our reciprocal trade programs played an important role in our relations with continental Europe, and today they form a basic policy in our relations with the British Empire—especially for the two largest customers for American exports, the United Kingdom and Canada. Experts in these matters declare that it is of the greatest importance to the war effort that these arrangements be maintained.

Opponents of the existing measure are now rallying all their forces for the attack. As a consumer, as a member of the family of United Nations, as a taxpayer who will pay the price of any future clogging of international trade channels, it would seem that we should consider well whether we should not be doing all that lies within our power to see that the Trade Agreement Act does not lapse on June 12, 1943.

## Calling All Nurses

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of your local hospital, or a teacher in a school of nursing which is preparing young nurses for future service.

**B**y all means consult your local Nursing Council for War Service about which nurses are essential at home and which can be spared, before aiding a military recruitment drive. In doing this you will be able to gear your community's needs in the best possible way.

The nation has a significant "backlog" of nursing skills in some hundred thousand graduate nurses who are either inactive or have gone into other types of work. Many of these women could, after a brief refresher course, return to their profession if some provision for the care of their children were made. Perhaps this is where your club could step in and fill the breach by starting a day nursery. Or where you as an individual could give the needed helping hand.

As individuals, every Federation member can help to ease the situation by becoming a Red Cross Nurse's Aide, and, in leisure time, aiding hospital nurses in their colossal daily tasks. I know an erudite, middle-aged statistician who is working evenings as an Aide in the maternity ward of an enormous city hospital. I'm not sure how many maternal impulses can find expression in tending babies that come at one in long rows of carts, six babies to the cart. Yet this friend of mine is brighter-eyed about this Aide work than she has been over her job, a really important one, for many a year. If nothing more, it must be exciting to see our really smashing vital statistics coming to life before one's very eyes, as she does. You may have heard that the birth rate in 1942 was nearly 11 per cent over that of 1941, which was higher than at any time since 1930. The offering of premiums for childbearing can, it seems, safely be left to the dictators. Nine months after Pearl Harbor the United States' birth rate started to soar—quite of its own accord and without benefit of subsidies.

**B**usiness women can all join a Red Cross Home Nursing class, or at least encourage all the mothers of families they know to do so, in order that minor ailments may be cared for at home, and pressure on the hospitals relieved.

Because Business and Professional Women's Clubs so often have members who are nurses, and because they have so frequently raised scholarships for students of nursing, special insight into the war crisis in nursing can be expected of them. They can help both to further community understanding of its crucial nursing problem, and to obtain needed action to meet it.