

THE PILOT

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"FOREST FIRE"

Fire Prevention Week was inaugurated in Sandhills township by the start of a fire which, if unchecked might have destroyed one of the prettiest stretches of wood around here. Due to the hard work of the local firefighters the fire was under control and extinguished within a couple of hours. It started in a patch of partly cleared ground far from a road so that for once the passing motorist cannot be blamed. The cigarette of a Sunday stroller or the fire of a picnic party are the most likely suspects. Last to be considered is the chance of deliberate arson. In the old days when work was scarce it was thought that fires were occasionally started by men who hoped to earn a few dollars fighting them. Sometimes, too, a man with an enemy had his timber burned up and sometimes a pyromaniac indulged his yearning for a good big blaze. Sunday's fire had none of these lurid implications. It is probable it was that far more common, and depressingly avoidable event, the result of man's innate carelessness.

Americans are prone to this sort of carelessness and in this particularly American state it is a particularly evident American quality. Our people are of Scottish stock, independent, proud, sure of themselves. The New England virtues of neatness, planning, foresight are lacking in this land of wide spaces and uncertain livelihood. Our people are generous to a fault, hospitable, kind; but if the spirit of a big young country has tempered their Scottish dourness, it has also encouraged thoughtlessness, wastefulness, carelessness not only of their own affairs but of the rights of others. They have no sense of property, their own or anyone else's.

We have no fences to speak of in the Sandhills, no gates and "Keep Out" signs; the pine woods stretch their scented acres from farm to scattered farm and no one knows or thinks it important to know who owns them. Hunters, bird clubbers, flower seekers, strollers, lovers, picnickers, hikers—not to mention drunks and garbage dumpers—wander through the woods and fields at will. They smoke, they spread newspapers to sit on, they open coca colas and picnic kits. They do all this with no thought of the owner of the property who may or may not relish this dreamy invasion. The chances are of course that he is indifferent to it or even welcoming in his attitude, at least toward most elements in the multitude. He is hardly indifferent, however, to what one in every hundred, let us say, leaves behind. Garbage, bottles, tin cans, orange skins, paper are ugly litter; when the calling card is a nice brisk forest fire the owner's fury is as hot as the blaze itself. "Careless loafers, trespassers, scoundrels" are the mildest epithets to fall from his indignant lips. Jumping in his car he drives to the fire.

"Americans have no sense of property rights," we say. It looks as if it were a true statement in every respect. The fire is started by trespassers.

But here, fighting it, are more trespassers. Neighbors driving by discovered the fire; one jumped out to fight it and the other rushed to the nearest house to telephone the owner. He arrives upon a stirring scene. Clouds of smoke are billowing over head, flames leap up, the underbrush crackles in fiery venom. Silhouetted against this inferno is a crowd of people in violent action. Shovels are flying,

pine branches whacking, hoses spraying. The local fire truck has been denuded of its extinguishers and the people of a nearby house have brought their's. The crowd of neighbors, Sunday drivers, strangers, farmhands, wandering negroes, has organized itself into a highly competent fire brigade under the guidance of the local firemen and are fighting fire.

These people do not know how the fire started. It is not on their land; none of them care and many of them do not know who owns the land. They are in no way involved in the catastrophe. Yet sacrificing time, clothes, running the risk of burns, they are fighting the fire with all the strength, ingenuity and courage they have. Americans are not respectors of property. They do not say: "That is your land, therefore I must not cross it." On the other hand they do not, either, say: "That is your land and when a fire breaks out on it it's no business of mine; you go put it out yourself." Why is this? Why do we rush to put out a fire when it is no concern of ours. Because fires are bad for the property owner? Yes of course. For the community? Again, of course. But it is not enough to say, simply, because fires are bad, and because when bad things are going on Americans do something about them. Ordinarily careless and easy going, once their emotions are aroused no people are quicker to shake off their selfish lethargy and spring to action.

When the Lease-Lend Bill was discussed by the President he used the analogy of a man whose neighbor's house is burning up, and who lends his hose to put out the fire. While applicable to the general situation the analogy was not appropriate to the American people. If a neighbor's house catches fire the last thing an American will do is to lend his hose to put it out. He will take the hose and he will use it on the fire himself. The chances are further, that he will tell the house owner just how he should be using his own hose, and when the fire engine comes he will probably take that over and run it too.

The fundamental reason for the vast discontent and uncertainty among Americans now is because they are not acting in accordance with their true instincts. A forest fire is burning and they are standing watching it. It is not on their land or directly threatening them. They are not responsible for it; they know that those who are fighting it could have prevented it, could have stopped it when it started. They suspect that the present fighters are inefficient; they know they have been slow and criminally stupid. Perhaps they even think that the fire itself has in its ravages cleared out some rotten wood. None of these factors affect the funda-

THE POCKETBOOK of KNOWLEDGE BY TOPPS

"FLASHLIGHT THUMB" IS A NEW "MALADY" IN BRITAIN... CAUSED BY CONSTANT SWITCHING OF THE "TORCHES" OFF AND ON IN BLACKOUTS, WHICH PRODUCES SORE SPOTS ON THUMBS.

THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN U.S. SHIPBUILDING INCREASED 70% IN ONE YEAR'S TIME (1940-41)

RESEARCH HAS DEVELOPED AN "ANTISEPTIC ICE" WHICH IN EXPERIMENTS HAS PRESERVED PERISHABLES 11 DAYS

THERE'S NOTHING NEW ABOUT FALSE TEETH... THE PEOPLE OF ANCIENT ROME WORE 'EM!

BIG INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION JOB... 16,000 POUNDS OF ALUMINUM ARE NEEDED FOR A MODERN 4-MOTOR FLYING FORTRESS!

The Draft

Interesting Figures About Selective Service System Given Out by Gen. Metts

Expressing pride in the smooth working machinery of the State Selective Service System, General Metts gave out some figures showing accomplishments through April 30.

Out of a total of 454,335 registrants (of whom 325,358 are white and 128,977 are negro), classification has been completed for 130,141. Of this number, 24,108 have been found available for general or limited military service; 1,963 have been deferred on account of being necessary men in their civilian occupations; 94,290 have been deferred because they have dependents; and 9,780 have been deferred for other reasons.

Of interest is the fact that 26 registrants have been found to be conscientious objectors and therefore deferred; 38 men have been deferred because they are aliens; 424 have been deferred because they are ministers or divinity students. Out of 29,226 physically examined, 5,069 have been rejected.

Out of a total of 10,570 men delivered to the induction station, 1,786 were rejected for various reasons.

A total of 9,629 men have volunteered. Of this number 5,356 were white and 4,273 negro. Men desiring to volunteer are not automatically accepted, but are required to be classified and will not be accepted unless they are finally placed in Class I-A. Of the total of 9,629 who applied for voluntary induction, 8,795 have actually been classified and only 6,196 have been placed in I-A.

The State has a pool of 6,193 men who have been physically examined and placed in Class I-A and are awaiting induction, and another pool of 11,040 who have been tentatively recorded as I-A men but who have not been finally so classified because they have not yet been physically examined.

A BOBOLINGO

Editor, The Pilot:

I commend to your rapt and respectful attention the following perfect lyric by my good friend Frank Sullivan which appears in the New Yorker. I hope it becomes the State Song:

"Nothing could be finer
Than to be in Carolina
On the votin' day the pollin'
Routs a certain so-and-Solon."

—STRUTHERS BURT.

This letter, appearing also in the Charlotte News, prompted the following editorial comment:

"We take it that you're
Ain't directed at Josiah."

mental situation in the least and Americans know it.

There is a bad fire raging; it must be put out. "Give us the tools," Churchill said, but all over the country Americans are beginning to answer: "Aw heck! Get the hose, boys, and let's go to work."

Grains of Sand

The busiest spot in the country on the night of a national election is a big newspaper office. The layman always pictures it as bedlam. It is anything but. The wheels turn rapidly, but quietly, smoothly. There's the whirr of adding machines, the click of typewriters, the scurrying feet of copy boys from desk to desk, the dada-da-da-dada of teletypes, but there's no mad dashing about, no shouting—a machine running in the smooth grease of organization.

We spent two days last week in Washington, and were struck by the analogy. Washington today is the world news capital, and it's the hub of the whirling wheel of the Americas in all things. It should be bedlam, but it isn't. We read of the excited activities in the State Department due to the sinking of the Robin Moor. We wander by the stately old building on Pennsylvania avenue. Few are entering, leaving. No one is rushing madly.

The President has just "frozen" foreign credits in the country. Front page newspaper stuff. But there's no sign of unusual activity around the Treasury building.

We wandered over to the War Department, housed in a new workmanlike structure on Constitution avenue. Beehive of activity. Many entering, leaving. But behind the windows officers are quietly at their desks, studying, working, interviewing, planning. No one tearing hair. The same at the Navy Department.

Congress always seems confusion itself, but underneath it all work is being accomplished systematically. The visitor sees the House in session with its 435 members—all striving to talk at once—nearest thing to bedlam you can view in Washington; or the Senate, with its 96 members and no rule limiting debate. But the real work isn't accomplished on the floors of these historic bodies; it's done in quiet committee rooms, far from the madding crowd.

Washington has never been busier. But despite this, the old saying, "All quiet along the Potomac," came to mind. Perhaps it's the stately influence of Washington, Lincoln, Jeffer-

son, whose monumental memorials cast their shadows across the shore.

Is this an augury?

We passed, at 17th and F streets, a building bearing a sign, "National Council for Prevention of War." In four windows were signs, "For Rent."

A party of ladies were leaving the Senate Office Building, and we overheard a bit of their conversation. They had been to the office of Senator Reynolds, North Carolina; had talked to Kelsey McDonald, the Senator's secretary.

"But I just couldn't make myself refer to the Senator as 'Honorable,'" one of them said.

Both the Army and Navy buildings have little side offices off the lobby where briefcases are rigidly examined by inspectors before the bearers are permitted inside. And visitors are tion card only. Officers and employes wear identification tags bearing their pictures.

—N. C. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Editor, The Pilot:

In this good old U. S. A., everyone has a right to express his opinions, privately or publicly on any subject, up to certain limits, and that's one of the reasons why its good to live under the folds of the Star Spangled Banner.

I must disagree, however, with Mr. Yeomans that said Star Spangled Banner should be kept under cover except, perhaps, on Flag Day and the Fourth of July. According to this perhaps the singing of America should be discontinued before Kiwanis and Rotarian luncheons and I might add that the reason, perhaps, that America is substituted for the Star Spangled Banner at such functions is the fact that, unfortunately, the latter just isn't singable with the ordinary human voice.

When I read about the banning of all American films in the conquered countries in Europe where only films sponsored by the Hitler regime are allowed to be shown, I am grateful that I live in America and for that reason alone, I am enthusiastic about

the Star Spangled Banner.

I agree that it should not be used perfunctorily, else it loses its meaning, but if we are not in an emergency then I do not know the meaning of the word, and it was with the utmost reverence for our Flag that I began the playing of the Star Spangled Banner in the only way possible under our mechanized equipment. I do not have to remind our citizens that "God Save The King" is played in England and Canada at the beginning of every performance and most often at the end, which may be one of the reasons why these countries are keeping their chin up in these trying times, and may have a bearing on the absence of so many strikes with which we are now afflicted.

I must confess that I had not noted the "mechanical and bored way in which the audience rises" and I have been the recipient of many commendatory remarks from my patrons, many of whom expressed the regret that they were unable to sing it.

I have deemed it a privilege to salute our Flag at the beginning of our performances, at this particular time, and have felt that the majority of our citizens were in sympathy with it and have felt that I was not being indiscriminate in its use. If I am wrong, I am sorry.

—CHAS. W. PICQUET.

MR. SERL DISAGREES

To Struthers Burt, Southern Pines author, in reply to a contributed editorial to The Pilot, comes this letter from a former pastor of the Church of Wide Fellowship, now of Lone Oak Farm, Delavan, Wisconsin:

"Dear Mr. Burt:

If you are so keen for war as your Pilot editorial of May 23d indicates,—go to it yourself, and get loose from these committees of obsolete destroyers. You give me a pain in the neck! Read history, and think through, and talk less.

—ELMER WILLIS SERL.

Sportsmen: Do your part in reserving hunting and fishing by cooperating in the prevention of forest fires. Blackened ruins follow the burning of brush and forest lands and may make the areas covered useless for years following needlessly started fires. Be careful with matches and fire in any form in the outdoors.

To turn out better work
... pause and

Turn to
Refreshment



Coca-Cola is made with the skill that comes from a lifetime of practice. It has the quality of genuine goodness. Thirst asks nothing more. So when you pause throughout the day, make it the pause that refreshes with ice-cold Coca-Cola.

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