

Fire Drills and National Defense Day

An Editorial published in the interest of Winnetka's Defense Day Program

The people who advocate fire drills for children attending school are not necessarily fire bugs or incendiaries. Neither are those who advocate a national defense day in which the able-bodied men of military age are asked to gather at a convenient community concentration point, necessarily American Junkers intent upon Prussianizing the American people, and determined that we shall go to war against some one at the earliest possible moment.

It does not create in children a desire to be in a school building when it catches on fire, because a fire drill is held once or twice a year. Neither does such a drill make the teachers who supervise it instruments of hell and enemies of humanity.

National Defense Day is a fire drill. Its main purpose is to give the individual citizen the most elementary of lessons in what would be required of him in case of public necessity. All it asks him to do is to gather with his fellows for two or three hours and then go back home. He isn't asked to kill any one; he isn't asked to endanger his own life; he isn't asked to endure hardship; or to put up with any inconvenience. All that is expected is that he may gain a trifling knowledge of the problem involved in so simple a thing as calling able-bodied men together in any organization that distinguishes it from a mob.

The pacifists are objecting to national defense day. They are afraid it will get men to think in terms of war. They are alarmed lest the fun of playing soldier for a few brief hours be so exhilarating that those who participate will never again be satisfied any where but in the army, and that as soon as they get back home they will instantly start a campaign to begin war against some nation, it matters little which. It is just as sensible to expect that a fire drill in a school house will encourage children to become incendiaries. If the moral mind of the child is sufficient to resist such a temptation, why should one despair of the mature man and admit that he is lost for all things except bloody war, once he meets for a few hours with other men in the name of national defense?

But, it is shrilly proclaimed, the plan is to mobilize an army. Army nothing! A Bryan army, maybe. One of these armies that spring up a million strong over night. That isn't an army. It isn't even a first class mob.

During the late war be it remembered that the United States declared war early in April, and it did not even land any troops in France till four months after, and such as got there then were of the regular army, and these were not trusted even in unimportant sectors of quiet zones until another four months. The United States was in the war eight months before any of its soldiers fired a hostile shot, and it was in the war more than year before any but regular army soldiers were permitted within cannon shot of the front lines.

The English and the French contended right up to the days of St. Mihiel that America didn't have an army, never could have one, and that the men it was sending over in soldier's uniforms were fit only to be assigned to fill vacancies in the English and French armies made by the war. That's what they thought of our "army," an army that had been more than a year in the making; an army that had drilled, and drilled and which when it went into battle knew not how to take care of itself, was largely ignorant of the technique of war; an army that succeeded simply because the men composing it were naturally fighting men, who had never learned how to retreat, and knew

but one command, and that was to advance. That army—if you can really call it an army, altho it never was in any fair sense of the term—did a wonderful work, and America is immensely proud of the way it acquitted itself; yet in the doing of that work thousands of as fine young men as ever breathed air were sacrificed unnecessarily, because our army was not an army, but merely a bunch of determined boys who could not be stopped by neither man nor devil.

In the light of that experience in 1917-'18 think of the effrontery, the absolute dishonesty, and the brazen insincerity of terming the proposed gathering September 12 as the "mobilization of an army." To go back to the fire drill in the school house simile, one might as well say that the children who are marched out of the building in response to a test alarm were the fire department of the city, and that the life object of each child thereafter would be to remain a member of the city fire department.

Is it a wise thing or an unwise thing that the men of this nation should know at first hand some of the problems incident to the military defense of their country? Does such a knowledge invite belligerency, or is it rather calculated to bring home the seriousness of such matters, and make one cautious rather than impulsive? If war is the hell it is generally said to be, then reasoning minds would be filled with added caution at the contemplation of its machinery, and be more inclined than ever to be careful how they tampered with a loaded gun.

The general public may enjoy seeing a fire, but there isn't much pleasure seeing your own house burn down, even if you are helping the firemen to put it out. There may be a certain excitement in war, but for those who are called upon to face the enemy's attack the prospect isn't so alluring in the majority of cases that there isn't general rejoicing when war has ended. It wasn't just pacifists who celebrated the Armistice. It was an entire nation, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, men in the army, men on the ocean—every American sang hallelujahs from a bursting heart as never before or since.

A fire drill is not an incentive to start a conflagration. A national defense day is not an incentive to war, but a precaution and an insurance against it.—A. T. Burrows, in the Urbana (Ill.) Courier, July 29, 1924.

EXTENDED HOLIDAY
Officials and clerical workers of the Village hall will have an extended week-end holiday. The office will be closed all day September 1, Labor Day.

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Caddies Turn Players in Annual Indian Hill Event

Caddies at the Indian Hill Golf club did something besides carrying sticks and retrieving elusive balls Monday of this week. The boys were the guests of the club in the annual Caddy tournament and banquet and, needless to say, a "good time was enjoyed by all".

Special tennis events for Labor Day at the Indian Hill club were announced as follows this week:

Singles events for men, women and juniors; "Racquet Wielders" contest for boys and girls; "Ball Chasers" contest for older boys and girls; Junior "Ball Chasers" event for boys and girls under 10 years of age.

The 1924 club championship will be held September 10 to 15 and will consist of singles and doubles events, according to G. J. Higgins, tennis professional.



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North Shore Club Opens Formally on August 30

The formal opening of the North Shore Golf club, on Glenview road, will take place Saturday, August 30, with a dinner-dance in the evening, and qualifying rounds in several tournaments, during the day.

Members of the club entering the tournaments will initiate the new golf



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course on Saturday. Those qualifying in the early rounds will play for the championship on Labor Day in two ball mixed foursomes and an 18 hole match play.

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