

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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MADAME CHIANG KAI SHEK.

The galleries were filled. Five thousand requests for tickets were denied. Every member was on the floor. There was eager expectancy. A distinguished visitor was soon to appear. Movie and press cameras were located in the galleries. Special bright lights were on. The House chamber seemed like the world's stage. The Speaker gavelled for order and then announced a committee of four to escort the visitor to the Speaker's rostrum. There was a brief recess as the committee retired. The hard walls echoed the incessant hub-bub of conversation and noise. The Speaker suddenly rapped for order. The Committee of four walked down the center aisle accompanied by the distinguished guest. Necks craned to see her. She seemed so small. Then an ovation--a sustained salvo of applause. It subsided. She shook hands with the Speaker. She faced that audience of Congressmen and visitors. There was deafening applause. It continued a long time. Each person appraised her. The tight-fitting oriental dress, with long skirt, the high collar, shimmering hair, the lovely olive face a thrusting personality, a countenance where was deeply written the trials and tribulations of her country, a face with courage and determination. "Members of the House of Representatives," began the Speaker; "I have the honor and the privilege of presenting Madame Chiang Kai Shek." Deafening applause. With perfect poise, she acknowledged the introduction with a slight bow and a smile. It was the wistful smile that mirrored the anguish of a nation despoiled and partially destroyed by 7 years of conflict. "Mr. Speaker..," she began. The bright lights were disturbing. The Speaker ordered them extinguished. "Members of the House of Representatives.." Excellent enunciation. A firm voice. Words so precisely rounded. Members were enthralled. Occasionally she used a tense gesture for emphasis. Her compliments to America and American troops were so gracious. As she spoke of under-rating Japanese strength, her body tensed and the voice was filled with emotion. At the end of her address, a slight bow to the Speaker. Suddenly, thunderous applause. She smiled and bowed to the membership, left the rostrum and was escorted from the Chamber. Madame Chiang had come and conquered.

WAR AND THE WANT-AD COLUMNS.

The armed services, the defense plants, and government positions have siphoned men and women from business and industry, leaving an acute shortage which stores, shops, factories, and other enterprises seek to fill by want-ads. In a single Sunday edition in the nation's capital more than 700 want-ads have appeared under "Help Wanted." It includes optometrists, elevator operators, janitors, typists, clerks, salesmen, telephone operators, bus and street car operators, milliners, domestics, mechanics, credit men, accountants, pressers, stock boys, checkers, and what not. Even the British Purchasing Mission finds it necessary to advertise for clerks, typists, stenographers, and other necessary help. Such is the impact of war.

ABSENTEEISM AND PROHIBITION.

"Absenteeism" has become a common word recently. It refers to absence from work in defense plants, thereby slowing down production. Several bills have been introduced in Congress to deal with this condition, notably that of Representative Johnson of Texas which would provide that in the case of absentees who are of draft age, their unjustified absence from work would be cause for having their names certified to a draft board. Now comes Congressman Joseph Raleigh Bryson of South Carolina with a bill to prohibit the manufacture, transportation, and sale of intoxicants for the duration on the ground that intoxicating beverages contribute to absenteeism.

GREATNESS IN HUMILITY.

Steve Vasilakos is gone. He was a humble peanut vendor and a great man. For a quarter of a century, Steve Vasilakos sold peanuts from a pushcart at the White House corner. Clerks and statesmen, White House dignitaries, and visiting soldiers bought peanuts from his cart, visited with him, and discovered in this humble person, a great spirit with two sons in the Greek Army. His ambition to become an American citizen was realized two years ago. From his meager funds, he bought bonds generously, aided people in distress, and became a national fixture. Last week, he passed on. Only a peanut vendor but a great man.

MARS AND THE STORK.

In December 1938 and also in 1939, reports from 5 large cities showed 400 births for the month. In December 1942, the same cities showed 720 births. War inspires or hastens marriages, increases births. It's a strange relationship between the God of War and the Stork. This phenomenon has been true for generations.