FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY

It was in that grim and dark period of 1914. The dove of peace had flown. The Legions rolled and the deep-voiced guns intoned over the fields of Europe. A Canadian went to the front. His name was John McCrae. For four years he experienced the hideousness of war. He died in January 1918, ten months before the issue was finally resolved. Before death blocked out the strings of mind and the stringings of his soul, he set down upon crumpled paper a deathless message which the world now knows as Flanders Fields. Beautiful and brief, it goes in part:

We are the dead Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

A soldier left that enriching message for posterity. He was a part of the greatest conflict in all history—greater, more horrible in some respects than the mechanized conflict of today. War is a swift moving enterprise today. A generation ago it was entrenched. On a 400 four hundred mile line across Europe nearly 250 divisions faced each other in the grim business of death—1 every four miles. The shell shocked veterans of today bear mute testimony to the horror of that conflict. In the shambles of Verdun, there were more than 700,000 casualties. It was the price of a 3 mile advance. When stillness returned to the earth, the reckoning made, there were more than 37 million casualties. There were more than 8 million dead.

A generation ago to the horror of the conflict was at work. The lights went out again. Twenty years and nine months later, the blight began and 50 million men in all parts of the earth moved into uniform. It was the arbitrament of war. Again the eerie voices of millions could sing from patriot graves, "We are the dead, short days ago, we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, loved and were loved, and now we lie in Flanders fields."

Somehow the foolish business of killing must stop. Forty-nine Republican governors, Senators, Congressmen met on an island in the Great Lake to agree on collaboration. By a vote of 360 to 29, the House of Representatives declared for the necessary machinery of statecraft as a move toward enduring peace in the future. On November 5, just 6 days short of the 25th anniversary of the armistice—the Senate by a vote of 85 to 5 adopted a resolution, looking toward enduring peace through collaboration. In the Senate there were those who were there in 1919 and who opposed collaboration. On November 5, 1943, they voted for the resolution. They are Senators McNary of Oregon and Capper of Kansas, both Republicans, and Senator Walsh of Massachusetts, a Democrat. What an epic footnote to history. Peace will yet have an opportunity to endure.