

- (a) Physicians over 55 years of age.
- (b) Physicians with obvious physical disabilities which are disqualifying.
- (c) Those rejected for all government service because of physical disability.

14. *What are some of the duties that this last group of physicians ineligible for active military service may be requested to perform?*

(a) Deducting those members of the medical profession who will eventually be in active military, naval or public health service, fully 75 per cent. of the remainder will be encouraged to continue at the home duties.

(b) Some of these may be called upon to supplement their private practices by performing part time service to meet community needs hitherto performed by men called to active duty.

(c) Twenty-five per cent. of those not actually engaged in war service (possibly 20,000 in number) who are not engaged in home duties but who have agreed to do work of any kind, anywhere, upon request of the Central Governing Board, will as the emergency arises be recommended for duty in the following places:

1. Local and medical advisory boards.
2. Medical Schools and Hospitals.
3. Industrial plants.
4. Health Departments.
5. Communities lacking medical service.

15. *How does enrollment in this Corps differ from actual conscription?*—The Volunteer Medical Service Corps is exactly what its name indicates. It is a gentleman's agreement on the part of the civilian doctors of the United States who have not yet been commissioned in the Army or Navy or enrolled in the Public Health Service, or in the service of the Provost Marshal General, and a representative board consisting of government officials associated with lay members of the profession in which the civilian physicians agree to offer their services to the Government if requested to do so by the Central Governing Board.

16. *In what way can this Corps aid the Government?*—By recording all physicians who are not yet in service and classifying them so as to utilize the talents and facilities of individuals to the best advantage and inflict as little hardship on the individual as possible, in accordance with the letter from the President of the United States authorizing the Corps—"to supply the needs of the Army, Navy and Public Health Service * * * aiding in the important work of the Provost Marshal General's Office and Red Cross * * * and the problems of the health of the civilian communities of the United States." It provides a method by which every physician not in uniform will be entitled to wear an insignia which indicates his willingness to serve his Government. It furnishes a method by which the medical needs of the nation may be provided for through a representative board of physicians who know

the needs of the Army, Navy, Public Health Service, Red Cross and civil communities.

17. *To what extent must provision be made for essential civilian and industrial medical needs?*—A large percentage of the physicians of the country will be required to care for their respective home communities and to meet civilian health needs. This percentage of necessity will be expected to maintain their home status and continue their professional work.

18. *Will enrollment in the Volunteer Medical Service Corps excuse a physician in the draft age from registration under the Selective Service Law or from being classified therein?*—Positively not.

19. *Why then enroll in the Volunteer Medical Service Corps if it does not supplant the draft?*

(a) Under the Selective Service Law individuals in the draft age are registered and inducted into the service as privates. The Volunteer Medical Service Corps enrolls and classifies individuals as prospective commissioned officers and will when requested assist in establishing the individual's status when he requests transfer from the enlisted forces to the commissioned branches of the service.

(b) Enrollment in the Volunteer Medical Service Corps definitely registers the physician as a patriot and provides definite governmental recognition of his willingness to serve.

20. *Why should every physician in the United States enroll in the Volunteer Medical Service Corps?*

(a) The unsurpassed record of volunteer enrollment for actual service on the part of the medical profession must be maintained.

(b) The Army and the Navy must not be hampered for a moment for lack of doctors to care for the sick and wounded boys fighting our battles at the front.

(c) The public health must be conserved.

(d) The medical needs of the Provost Marshal General must be adequately met.

(e) The great industries furnishing materials of war, employing thousands of patriotic workers, must have medical service.

(f) The home folks, the old and the young, wearily waiting over here, must have doctors.

(g) Recording, classifying, and careful distribution and full utilization of our entire profession of medicine will enable us instantly to supply all demands, and our utmost resources will then be available to aid in establishing a permanent peace that will forever make this world a safe place in which women and children may live.

Correspondence.

VOLUNTEER MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS.

[The following correspondence deals with various aspects of the project of the Volunteer Medical Service Corps.]

I.

Boston, Mass., Sept. 4, 1918.

To: The Provost Marshal-General, U. S. Army,
Washington, D. C.,

Subject: The exemption of workers in the campaign
against venereal disease.

1. Attention is invited to the enclosed correspondence.

2. Attention is invited to the fact that the recruiting drive of the Council of National Defense has disrupted the already efficient clinics for venereal disease in New England and is making it impossible to provide additional facilities which are sorely needed.

3. In the attempt to reach the draftee, in compliance with P. M. G. O. Form 76, clinical facilities for the treatment of cases found among the draftees are vitally necessary and the State venereal disease control officers, cooperating with the U. S. P. H. Service, are at present and will be in the future greatly handicapped without adequate medical and lay personnel.

4. Instruction and advice are requested on this matter so that we shall be able to formulate a definite policy, and it is respectfully suggested that the Provost Marshal-General notify the State Health Departments of the action that may be taken and that some type of instruction be issued to the Council of National Defense in this regard.

ALEC N. THOMSON, Major, M.C., U.S. Army,
State House, Boston, Mass.

II.

Sept. 5, 1918.

To: Provost Marshal-General, U.S.A., Washington,
D. C.

Subject: Maintenance of civilian personnel in combating venereal disease.

1. The attached correspondence is self-explanatory and is forwarded to receive instruction so that I may comply with the request of the Boston Dispensary and other institutions of similar character for information on this vital subject.

2. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to establish new clinics and maintain the existing clinics because of the active recruiting drive being carried on under the auspices of the Council of National Defense for physicians to make applications for commissions. The feeling is general that any physician is unpatriotic who, realizing his peculiar relation to the War Department's effort to control venereal disease, does not immediately fill out an application blank. This is unfortunate and, if possible, should be counteracted by some definite statement.

ALEC N. THOMSON, Major, M.C., U.S.A.,
Chief, Subdivision of Venereal Disease,
State House, Boston, Mass.

III.

War Dept., P.M.G.O., September 10, 1918.

To Alec N. Thomson, Major, M.C., U.S.A.,
State House, Boston, Mass.

1. Referring to Paragraph 4 of your letter of September 4, it is not probable that the Provost Marshal-General will issue instructions of a specific nature directly to organizations not a branch of the Government nor functioning under him.

2. The Medical Section of the Advisory Committee of the Council of National Defense is not recognized as such branch of the Government, but is a very active body, interesting itself with physicians.

3. The District Boards will have instructions issued to them under which they may give deferred classification to necessary men engaged in essential

occupations or industries, upon claim supported by satisfactory evidence submitted by their employers.

4. No physician should be stigmatized as unpatriotic who continues to perform a manifest duty to Draft Boards, public health organizations or to his dependents first.

E. H. CROWDER, Provost Marshal-General.
By F. R. KEEFER, Colonel, M.C.,
Chief, Medical Division.

IV.

Boston, Mass., Sept. 10, 1918.

Mr. Editor:—

The enclosed clipping, from *The Journal of the American Medical Association* of Sept. 7, 1918, is such an admirable critique of the Volunteer Medical Service Corps that it deserves wide reading. Those of us who have been struggling with the problems of keeping our civil hospitals going and of providing teachers for our medical schools, have been so much handicapped by the activity of the committees of one sort or another who besiege the men with conflicting requests and advice, that we endorse heartily the opinion of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in regard to the Volunteer Medical Service Corps.

Will you be good enough to publish this clipping and, if you desire so to do, also my letter in the BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

Yours truly,
HENRY A. CHRISTIAN.

(CLIPPING.)

To the Editor:—There seems to be a considerable variation of opinion in regard to the Volunteer Medical Service Corps. Martin and his element seem to be pushing things with a pretty high hand, with their committees, sub-committees, little buttons, regulations—everybody to register or sign up. We are at a loss to know what is right.

W. E., Michigan.

ANSWER.—The formation of a new and special organization for the purpose of enlisting physicians in war service has from the beginning seemed to *The Journal* unnecessary and unwise. The needs of the Army and Navy have been met promptly so far by voluntary enlistments, and there has been no indication that the needs of the future would not have been satisfied in the same way, even under the volunteer system. However, the passing of the new selective service law now renders such an indefinite and indeterminate society as the Volunteer Medical Service Corps superfluous and uncalled for. The vigorous promotion of this organization is creating a regrettable confusion and anxiety among physicians that should be avoided in these trying times. This is no time to fritter away energy in the construction and maintenance of intricate machinery of questionable value to do work which is being done and will be accomplished satisfactorily through regularly established channels.

Every man, including physicians, under 46 years of age, must register on September 12. The selective service boards are the only bodies empowered to dispose of those registered under the law. This will be done under the regulations promulgated by the Provost Marshal-General. Undoubtedly special regulations for the guidance of those boards will be worked out by the Provost Marshal-General conferring with the Surgeon-Generals. So far as those above 46 years of age are concerned: They will have in the future, the same privilege of volunteering as they have had in the past. The operation of the new selective service law will, without doubt, take into account the needs of the civilian population while providing for the medical requirements of the government.