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## Editorials

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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LINACRE QUARTERLY

## EDITORIALS

### MEDICAL TURMOIL

Polka-dotting the world with civil violence is a recognized tactic of communist infiltration. The news coverage is intense for each theatre. Recall Korea, Formosa, Tibet, Africa, Cuba and Vietnam. Comfortable countries become dissatisfied suddenly with the governing bodies or with their neighbors. The economy of many allied nations is upset repeatedly in defense or offense. Shortly the news and the activity are gone: suggesting that both the unrest and the publicity were programmed in prearranged fashion by the same dictating force.

The health of each nation is second only in importance to the governing body. Health implies the physician as the supervisor. Taciticians hold that, at times, success is more readily achieved by attacking secondary objectives. Recall the press coverage of the Saskatchewan resistance, the English medical debate, the Belgian physicians' strike. Is it an accident that these simulate a polka-dot pattern?

W.J.E.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PATIENT'S PRIVACY

As with his opposite number on Madison Avenue, the efficiency of a hospital's public relations director is gauged in lines of type that relate to his client. It is quite understandable, therefore, that the hospitalization of a notable personage may be received with considerably more enthusiasm by the hospital's PR director than by the patient himself. If the rubrics of advertising are followed, as they usually are, the public is thereupon rewarded with a series of exquisitely detailed accounts ("medical bulletins") of the patient's progress—or deterioration. In all of these, of course, the name of the hospital figures predominantly. There are several obvious benefits from this procedure. In the first place, it provides gainful employment to the various clipping services and thus reduces the number of persons on the relief rolls. Secondly, it adds bulk to the scrap-book of the hospital's PR director. And finally, it furnishes concrete assurance to the man in the street that even famous; after all, are mortal too. What about the patient? It would certainly be indecorous to allege that the majority of "medical bulletins" released by hospital PR offices are not specifically authorized by the patient, or that his physician is not always consulted in this matter. So, rather than allege, perhaps it should only be suggested. Traditionally, the illness of a patient has been a private matter between him and his physician, unless he decides otherwise. The intrusion of a non-medical third party, whose interests are not primarily those of the individual patient, must be regarded warily. Even the famous are entitled to privacy in matters visceral.

E.G.L.

### "THE PILL"

Anyone connected with the Catholic Press will tell you that the inquiries on "The Pill" are endless. At first glance, it would appear that each inquirer is seeking a conscience balm: an authoritative statement that will be a release from the duties and obligations of Christian Marriage. On second glance, and adding the numerous calls from writers for the popular magazines, the picture changes: "Is this subtle promotion of a product limited in its advisability?"

Whatever the background, THE LINACRE QUARTERLY in this issue presents a trilogy: the physiology, the debate in England, a definite moral opinion. Until God changes His mind, we would like to put the pill to bed with the whimsical verse of Aussie Doctor Michael Kelly.

W.J.E.

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