

Notes on People

Sir Edmund Hillary, who suffered high-altitude sickness last week and was taken by helicopter to a military hospital, checked out yesterday to return to his 17,000-foot-high camp in the Himalayas. A spokesman at the hospital at Bareilly, India, indicated that the 58-year-old mountaineer wished to be on hand for the last phase of his expedition's attempt to climb **Nar Parbat**, the mountain on which he became ill. He apparently does not intend to join in the actual ascent, however. Sir Edmund, who with a sherpa guide conquered Mount Everest in 1953, came back to India as leader of an expedition up the Ganges from its mouth on the Bay of Bengal. He had hoped to trace the Ganges to its source in the Himalayas by jet boat, but was forced to move overland to Nar Parbat.

Fred Silverman, president of ABC Entertainment, yesterday presented **George Rubino**, a New York City schoolteacher, with a \$10,000 check as winner of the first ABC Theater Award. Mr. Rubino, 45, teaches at John Dewey High School in Brooklyn. He will receive in addition a \$20,000 author's fee when his original television play "The Last Tenant" is presented on ABC Theater in 1978. The play, about an old man who is forced to leave his longtime home and enter a nursing home, was developed by the playwright at the National Playwrights Conference of the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater at Waterford, Conn.

Clay Felker, the former publisher of New York and New West magazines and the new publisher of Esquire, yesterday stuck his thumb in a pie of a completely different sort. He and **Robert Stigwood**, the New York-based British entrepreneur, announced Mr. Felker's "exclusive association with the Stigwood Organization in the collaboration, development and co-production of major motion pictures and television projects." Mr. Stigwood said that "Mr. Felker's taste and skill in the creation of his publications and his expertise in dealing with writers and their material have proven him a giant in the world of communications. His gifts are a splendid addition to our organization." The Stigwood company produced the movie "Tommy" and the "Beacon Hill" TV show.

What probably cost her husband the 1976 election, says **Betty Ford**, was his pardon of **Richard M. Nixon**. "Many

people who definitely were for Gerry could not bring themselves to vote for him because he pardoned Nixon," Mrs. Ford is quoted as saying in the November issue of McCall's magazine. "I don't think they realized what a sick man Nixon was—physically sick, which tended to affect decisions. Jerry was a Republican, and he was associated with Nixon—and anyone associated with Nixon was automatically a 'bad guy.'"

Marie Christine von Opel, heiress to the German automotive fortune, who is in prison in Marseilles awaiting trial on drug possession charges, was transferred to the prison infirmary yesterday because she is suffering from "nervous depression." Miss von Opel, arrested with six friends when the police discovered a ton of hashish on July 6 in her villa at Saint Tropez, last week sought release on bail while awaiting trial, but the request was denied.

Anne Bancroft will open Nov. 6 as scheduled, in "Golda" on Broadway, despite the fact that the play's set was destroyed by fire in a Boston theater last Friday, a spokesman for the production said yesterday. No one is known to have been in the Wilbur Theater when the fire broke out, destroying the set, which is being rebuilt. Costumes for the play were damaged by water, but are being dried out. Miss Bancroft plays **Golda Meir**, the former Prime Minister of Israel, in the play by **William Gibson**.

The first converted Jew to become an Anglican Bishop, the **Rev. Dr. Hugh Montefiore**, will become Bishop of Birmingham, Eng., next month. Now Suffragan Bishop of Kingston, Jamaica, Bishop Montefiore, 57, was converted to Christianity at the age of 17. He is noted for his controversial views, including public attacks on the British-French supersonic jetliner, the Concorde, and the construction of nuclear breeder reactors.

Lorice Hartzog had pumped about 40 silver dollars into a slot machine at Harold's Club, in Reno, Nev., when all of a sudden, jackpot! Mrs. Hartzog won the biggest jackpot in Nevada history, \$236,756, in a "progressive" slot machine, the same one that paid \$180,886 to a player last April. Mrs. Hartzog's good luck came Sunday, on her 57th birthday.

ALBIN KREBS.