

THE PROBLEM OF DRAFTING QUALIFIED GRADUATE STUDENTS BY SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

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DURING THE PAST SUMMER, local draft boards, particularly in southern California, have been actively classifying men accepted for graduate school as 1-A. Many of the highly qualified men have not been given adequate consideration for deferment to permit their receiving advanced training. In some localities the effects of this tendency have become very serious.

If the United States is to maintain a proper defense position, it must not only maintain an adequate military force, but also place itself in a strong development position. The Selective Service System was established by the Congress to provide a military force. It may well be questioned if the system that has been set up is as satisfactory as a program of universal military training. However, the problem at the moment is whether or not the present system is interfering with the advanced training of men who are required to carry on developments in order to keep a military force in the most advantageous position among the countries of the world.

The present attitude of the local boards is definitely leading to a situation that will reduce the number of men receiving advanced training. It is probable that the local boards are not cognizant of the seriousness of the situation and have not been properly advised by General Hershey's office.

The number of qualified men who would be deferred is not great. A qualified man can be defined as one who has maintained the academic standing required by the Selective Service System as an undergraduate, and who continues to do outstanding work in graduate school. Under this definition, it is clear that a relatively small number would be able to enter and complete graduate work. Actually in 1952, according to the Engineering Manpower Commission, a total of 529 Ph.D. degrees were granted in all branches of engineering in the U. S.

Certainly there should not be a blanket deferment of students who wish to attend graduate school. Each case must be considered individually, and each local board should determine the qualifications of each registrant and take appropriate action to see to it that those who are qualified are not only allowed, but urged, to obtain the maximum training commensurate with their capacity.

Many boards appear to be taking the attitude that no students should be permitted to go farther than the bachelor's degree (or at most one year of graduate work) before doing their turn in the military services. It does not seem to have been the intention of the Congress or General Hershey to draft all graduate students just because they are graduate students, or to permit no one to enter graduate work directly after receiving a bachelor's degree. The Universal Military Training and Service Act is clear in its purpose, as stated in Sections 1c and 1e, as follows:

"Section 1c—The Congress further declares that in a free society the obligations and privileges of serving in the armed forces and the reserve components thereof should be shared generally, in accordance with a system of selection which is fair and just, and which is consistent with the maintenance of an effective national economy.

Section 1e—The Congress further declares that adequate provision for national security requires maximum effort in the fields of scientific research and development, and the fullest possible utilization of the Nation's technological, scientific, and other critical manpower resources."

Section 1c indicates that selection is to be consistent with the maintenance of an effective economy. Section 1e specifically points to the necessity of maximum effort in the fields of scientific research and development with the best possible utilization of the nation's manpower resources for national security.

In spite of this stipulation, many cases can be cited in which the top men have been subject to induction even on appeal, and after adequate proof of a man's high standing has been presented to the local board by the educational institution concerned. Such action is not in the best interest of the country.

There is evidence that some boards believe that after one year of graduate work a man is more eligible for draft, and after two years is even more eligible. If a qualified man is allowed to start graduate work, it is important that he be allowed to complete this higher education. It is especially damaging to interrupt this

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training while the man's research is in progress.

The members of the local boards, in many instances, fail to realize that, for the good of the country and its defense, men of advanced training must be supplied continuously in order to provide the developments required for advancement in military preparedness. Advancement requires that there be men working on fundamental problems which provide information for others with advanced training to utilize in the development of new materials, new processes, and equipment.

Why has it been possible for the United States to be a leader in these things? It is because in the past, men of capacity have been given advanced training to provide them with the tools for research and development.

It is true that, for many technical positions, four years of basic training are sufficient. But here we are not talking about those men who receive sufficient training for these positions. We are talking about those whose capacity is great enough to warrant training them to the fullest for the greatest benefit of the country.

Research and the services

There is a belief by some that the military service, by the induction of graduate students, will secure men for highly technical work. This is not true, as is proven by the type of duty that is given to such inductees. The research and development that is done by the services is carried on in establishments manned primarily by civilian employees. A man who is drafted is not assigned to such establishments to occupy a position of high research responsibility. So it cannot be claimed that the services particularly seek those qualified for graduate work.

The military services are not in the business of research, but are concerned with the building of a strong defense organization, which must depend for its basic information upon research done in institutions in which the research atmosphere prevails.

We understand that medical students are deferred because of their importance to the health and safety of the country. However, basically the practicing physicians have done little in bringing about the great advance in medicine. The advances are the result of research by men who have had graduate training. Many developments have been accomplished in the universities by permanent staff members assisted by graduate students.

This brings us to the point of considering what men do in graduate school. Their work does not consist solely of attending classes, but involves a participation in the research of the staff that eventually leads to the developments which are of importance to the country as a whole, including the defense effort.

One frequently fails to realize the research of a fundamental character that is required before a jet plane or a gas turbine or other piece of equipment can be designed and built with success. Who are the people that

obtain this fundamental information? They are the research people located in the colleges and in some industrial organizations. Among the research people in the colleges are the graduate students, who contribute immeasurably to the solution of the problems undertaken, and who become proficient in their field so that they can carry on further these investigations that will contribute to the advanced position of the country. Therefore, it should be clear that to interfere with this flow of qualified men is detrimental to our success.

The type of men that can be of the greatest technical value to the military services as members of the armed forces includes those who have completed four years of college but are not the type that should enter graduate schools for higher degrees. The total number of men who should continue graduate work is not large in proportion to the total number who become available for service.

Certainly these men can serve the country best by being given advanced training. This is not a question of doing something to avoid service to the country, because the greatest service to the country is done by placing men in positions for which they are best qualified.

The view has been expressed that "the graduate schools can secure their students from those who have completed their military service and that thus the induction of present students will cause no shortage of graduate trained men. This does not seem to work out.

Of the applicants for graduate appointments, only one percent or less have completed service. Why? In the field of engineering, as also in science, the demand by industry for young men even at the bachelor's level is so great, and the financial rewards are so attractive, as compared with the small financial compensation associated with a graduate appointment that only a few of the most serious-minded will turn to graduate work.

A long delay

Furthermore, if the man has had military service, it is unusual for him to be willing to delay the professional career that would await him after a one-to-five-year program of graduate study. To put off the qualified men decreases the number that will complete the advanced training requisite for the highly technical work in this country necessary to defense and advancement.

It is not in the national interest that we curtail our educational or research efforts, particularly when countries such as Great Britain and Canada, and even Russia, are giving preferential treatment to those who are qualified for advanced work, such as superior students.

This is a serious problem which goes beyond any individual case. Something must be done to provide information to the local boards so that they may recognize this important problem, and secure information that will permit them to determine the qualifications of the registrant for graduate work—and, when these qualifications indicate graduate work, will encourage the added training.