

EDUCATION

Military Service Bill Affects Upper Classmen and Graduates

Raising of Minimum Age Limits Exempts Youngest Groups of Students; 31-Year-Old Men Also Out

COMMENTING privately on the Burke-Wadsworth bill as now before Congress, educators seem to be torn between two urgencies. First is their desire to see America served adequately for military defense. But there is a desire, equally strong, to prevent disruption of scientific research and education so essential to the preservation of democracy.

Although the change in minimum age limit from 18 to 21 was opposed by some college officials, it is welcomed by many who did not want to see youngsters below the voting age taken away from their high school or college studies or from their vocational training for military duty.

College students are still widely affected by the measure as revised. It has been estimated that between 30% and 40% of college students are above the present minimum age limit of 21. The average boy enters college at 19 and would be in his sophomore or junior year when he becomes of age.

Student Numbers Unknown

Only a few college students would be beyond the age of 30. This means that, except for the very bright younger boys, practically all the upper class students and all graduate students would be subject to call for military service under the Burke-Wadsworth bill as now worded. Officials in Washington do not know just how many juniors and seniors there are in American colleges. There were 55,864 male graduate students when the last count was made.

It is estimated that the colleges may expect to lose one out of every ten of their boys who are over 21. This would mean a money loss in tuition to some institutions of as much as \$700,000, in addition to the incalculable loss to the colleges and the nation of potential chemists, physicists, psychologists, or economists who are needed in solving present and post-war problems.

The bill now exempts cadets in the advanced course, senior division, Reserve Officers' Training Corps from registration, but this will affect relatively few

of the graduate students. This provision is objected to by some educators because it might attract enrolling students to those colleges that have the R.O.T.C. training and away from the many other institutions that do not provide it.

The advanced course which provides exemption under the present wording of the bill is not the compulsory part of the R.O.T.C. training, but is the elective part which is taken at some expense to the student. The number permitted to take this advanced training is strictly limited by the War Department because of limitations in funds. At the University of Maryland, for example, only 75 applicants were accepted for the advanced training this year out of 200 who wanted the training.

A way out would seem to be to offer military training for college boys on the campus and during vacation periods so that it would not break up their college work unless war should require their services at the front. At present no encouragement for such a plan is being offered by the War Department.

Bill Defines Own Wording

Men who are 31 years old are not affected by the Burke-Wadsworth bill now before Congress despite the fact that the bill refers to men "between the ages of 21 and 31." To most people, including census experts and population statisticians, this wording would take in those who are 21 and also those who are 31. But by definition in the bill itself, as reported by the Senate Committee, it includes the 21-year group but exempts those who are 31.

Here is the exact wording:

"The term 'between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one' shall refer to persons who have reached the twenty-first anniversary of the day of their birth and who have not reached the thirty-first anniversary of the day of their birth."

Science News Letter, August 31, 1940



X-RAY CLINIC ON WHEELS FOR BRITAIN

Complete with the latest X-ray equipment, this self-contained mobile clinic is now on its way to serve the British Red Cross, as a gift from the British War Relief Society. Shown inspecting the X-ray machine are (at center) the Hon. Lady Lindsay, wife of the former Ambassador from Great Britain, and Viscountess Knollys, wife of the British Deputy Commissioner for Civil Defense. Their guide is L. D. Canfield, vice-president and general manager of the Westinghouse X-Ray Company, which built the apparatus.

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