

behavioral sciences

EDUCATION

Caught in the draft

The Scientific Manpower Commission in Washington reports that although the number of graduate students drafted last semester is uncertain, some universities and some departments have suffered heavy losses.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the chemistry department reports that 7 of its 18 male first-year graduate students had been drafted by mid-March.

Between 100 and 115 graduate men at Stanford University had received induction notices by mid-March. A number of these men were expected to remain in school at least until June, however, since their notices came after the start of Stanford's third quarter.

Between July 1968 and January 1969, 17,500 draftees were college graduates. An additional 50,000 college graduates entered service as volunteers, and 11,000 came in through the reserves. Thus, the commission observes, "about 78,000 men with one or more college degrees entered military service in the first half of the fiscal year while draft calls were relatively low."

SOCIOLOGY

Thinking ahead

A poll of health professionals in Massachusetts reveals that a great majority favors family planning.

The survey, taken by Profs. William A. Darity and H. Jean Thiebaut of the University of Massachusetts, shows that 69 percent of pharmacists, 96 percent of nurses, 92 percent of physicians and 100 percent of social workers consider family planning services to be a good idea.

Asked whether they thought family planning services are necessary to the community, 96 percent of the nurses and social workers, 88 percent of the physicians and 77 percent of the pharmacists replied in the affirmative.

Despite this overwhelming support for the idea of family planning services, only 39 percent of the social workers, 72 percent of physicians, 20 percent of hospital nurses and 54 percent of pharmacists participate in the dissemination of fertility control information.

SLEEP

Truck noise and sleep

The usual method of evaluating the effects of nuisance noises, those below 85 decibels, is to submit them to the judgment of juries. But this procedure is highly subjective.

Dr. George Thiessen of the National Research Council of Canada decided to use sleeping subjects and chart their brain waves to determine response. Since the response is not conscious, subjectivity is avoided.

Results vary widely by individuals, he told the Acoustical Society of America meeting at Philadelphia. There are some people who awaken more than 50 percent of the time when the noise of a passing truck equals 50 decibels, while some never awaken even at 75 decibels, the highest level used in Dr. Thiessen's tests.

At 70 decibels the most probable reaction (30 percent) is to awaken. The next most probable is a shift in

the level of sleep. At 50 decibels the chance is 50 percent that there will be no reaction, but even at 40 to 45 decibels there is still a 10 percent chance of a change in sleep or awakening.

Dr. Thiessen sees a possible need for requiring much lower noise standards than are now accepted.

SOCIOLOGY

Abortion revisited

In the two years since Colorado's liberalized abortion law was enacted, the voters of that state have grown "significantly more liberal in their attitude toward abortion." This finding is part of a survey of the electorate conducted by Prof. John Cobb of the University of Colorado.

He told the meeting of the American Association of Planned Parenthood Physicians in San Francisco that 58 percent of adult Coloradans queried by the survey said that they would be perfectly willing to talk about abortion with almost anyone. Two years ago, before the liberal abortion law was passed, only 44 percent made the same statement.

There was also a drop in the percentage of voters who said they would actively oppose an organization working to make medical abortions easier to obtain legally. Two years ago, 31 percent would oppose such efforts. Now only 25 percent would. In rural areas, the percentages dropped from 41 to 22.

Even among Roman Catholics, who traditionally oppose liberalized abortion laws, there was some softening of antagonism. In the earlier study, 40 percent would approve abortion in cases of rape. Now the percentage has risen to 68.

Prof. Cobb reports that 47 percent of the respondents favor either leaving the present law as it is, liberalizing it or removing it entirely so that no anti-abortion law would be on the books.

SOCIOLOGY

Jobs wanted

"Extremely high rates of youth unemployment continue in spite of almost a decade of special youth-work programs and 95 months of uninterrupted economic advance," says Prof. Russell A. Nixon of the New York University Graduate School of Social Work.

"Although the official reported general rate of unemployment fell to 3.6 percent for 1968, the teenage jobless rate changed little from 1966 and 1967, and was reported as 11 percent for white and 25 percent for non-white teenagers in 1968," he adds.

Reporting on surveys of unemployed youth, Prof. Nixon told the recent meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association in New York: "The overwhelming implication is that the major difficulty in solving the problem of youth unemployment in poverty areas lies not in individual deficiencies of jobless youth but in the failure of the labor market to provide those youths access to adequate and satisfactory work opportunities."

Prof. Nixon says that the general conclusion he draws from studies of New York City's disadvantaged youth is that "most are employable and can be expected to respond positively to good job opportunities."

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