

GENERAL SCIENCE

Deferment of Military Service Asked for Science Workers

Scientists' Efforts in Laboratories Worth More For Defense Than Target Practice or Gun Squad Drill

STUDENTS, research workers and teachers in scientific and professional fields that make vital contributions to national defense should be given deferred classification under the Selective Service Act, Dr. C. A. Dykstra, director of the Selective Service System, was informed in a joint statement by the National Academy of Sciences and the Subcommittee on Military Affairs of the National Committee on Education. Dr. Dykstra had requested an expression of opinion of these organizations, for use in formulating a policy regarding the disposal of scientists and their students in colleges, universities and research institutions.

The scientists consulted by Dr. Dykstra list six scientific fields in which work is being done of such importance that in their opinion the workers are doing more toward national defense than if they were carrying rifles or doing gun drill. These are: medicine and allied professions, biological sciences, chemistry, physics, geology and related earth sciences, and engineering in all its branches.

Commenting on the desirability of such deferments, the committee points out: "Experience of every nation engaged in the World War and the conditions under which the present conflict in Europe is being waged point directly to the necessity for proper employment of scientific personnel and of those competent to train such personnel, to a continuous supply of newly trained personnel, and to the penalties incident to assigning them in large numbers to purely military service where others without their special training can function equally well."

Particular stress is laid on the desirability of permitting students in such fields as medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy to finish their courses before they take up their military duties, because of the large demand for trained men in both the military and civil sectors, and because intensive specialized training cannot make up for a deficiency of qualified personnel.

"In all six fields," the statement continues, "university presidents should request deferment of members of the teach-

ing staff who in their judgment are essential properly to maintain the efficiency of the institution in the continuous training of students necessary in the operation of the defense program or in the effective conduct of research and development problems assigned to the institution in connection therewith.

"The industrial laboratory and some graduate schools employ trained personnel often in group or team operations which require not only highly skilled individual scientists and engineers but likewise men accustomed to working together in close cooperation. Subtraction of a single key man from such a group may seriously handicap or even substantially destroy the efficiency of the group to function.

"The problem of the industrial and university research laboratory concerned with a present or prospective defense program is not only one of retaining an adequate number of highly trained research men, engineers and skilled technicians but also one of maintaining the integrity of research and development teams. This is because industrial research and development is a coordinated group activity.

"Research directors should request deferment of highly qualified men whose training and experience are such that their withdrawal will cripple the ability of the laboratory to function effectively in the defense program.

"In addition to trained scientists and engineers the industrial and university laboratory is largely dependent on skilled craftsmen, such as draftsmen, instrument makers, etc. Request for deferment of skilled men in these categories is indicated unless they can be replaced."

Science News Letter, December 21, 1940

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Mergers in Research And Education Expected

MERGERS of American research and educational institutions can be expected in the future, as "a conservation movement in cultural philanthropy," states Frederick P. Keppel, president of

the Carnegie Corporation, in his annual report.

There are more universities and colleges, and far more voluntary organizations for worthy purposes than the nation can possibly afford, Mr. Keppel declares. "In the years to come many of these are bound to disappear," he said, "and one of the most difficult duties that face the foundation is that of so directing its grants that its influence will be directed toward the survival of the fittest."

During the year 1939-40, the report shows, grants totaling \$4,692,000 have been made by the Carnegie Corporation for library interests, adult education, the arts, research, and publications.

Science News Letter, December 21, 1940



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