

RESEARCH

Unselective Service

Under-26 draft threat endangers America's research. Telegraphic survey shows that loss of technically skilled young men would seriously hamper the war effort.

► THE PRESSURE for drafting all young men under 26 is causing America's research laboratories in government and industry, working almost 100% on producing new weapons and materials for war, to face one of their most serious crises.

If the unselective induction of the cream of America's scientists and engineers continues, there will be lost in large part the magnificent research effort on which the Army and Navy are relying so heavily for new devices of war to "maintain superiority over an enemy who is desperately and skillfully depending on scientific skills."

At most about 4,000 young men under 26 years of age will be turned into combat troops if raiding of research laboratories is allowed to continue.

Many of these young men in their present jobs are worth their weight in generals. In the Army they would be mere untrained inductees, months away from any real service.

To assay the mounting danger, Science Service has polled telegraphically about a dozen of the leading research laboratories in the nation.

The research laboratories of Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Cambridge, Mass., possibly the largest war research center, have 478 of their technical staff engaged in war research who are under 26. According to President Karl T. Compton, who is also a member of the National Defense Research Committee, all of these men are irreplaceable. This number does not include 4F's or those released for physical disability.

"Selective service is rapidly becoming no longer selective," Dr. Compton declared. "Until recently the draft boards have been able to make intelligent decisions on deferment of essential personnel.

"The serious danger in the present pressure for mass induction," Dr. Compton continued, "is the irreparable loss of specialized knowledge for developing, producing and operating those scientific devices needed to maintain superiority over an enemy who is desperately and skillfully depending on scientific skills to match our unquestioned superiority

in mass production of standardized weapons.

"In modern warfare, battles are won in advance in the scientific laboratories, for which much credit is due the patriotic young scientists. As the war approaches the decisive point many young scientists have already been transferred from the research laboratories at home to the active theaters of war where they serve in field laboratories or in consulting groups to assist in securing most effective war use of the new weapons.

"It is already impossible to meet the demand for such experts in the field and any mass induction of the young scientists still in the laboratories would render impossible further supply of this very urgent and highly individualized special service."

At General Electric Research Laboratories, Schenectady, N. Y., there are 29 out of 145 total technical staff who are below 26, all of whom are irreplaceable, Dr. W. D. Coolidge, director, reported. The percentage of young men is highest in new developments like radar.

At Westinghouse Research Laboratories, East Pittsburgh, Pa., 32% of the technical staff is affected by the below 26 draft, and Dr. L. W. Chubb, director, declared that while the situation is too confused to predict final outcome, induction of research workers will delay important war research.

In Socony-Vacuum Oil Co. research laboratories there are 66 technically trained college graduates under 26 and this number, Dr. J. B. Rather, director, stated, is much lower than formerly because of losses to the armed forces. Deferment of 41 has been requested of the War Petroleum Administration, most of whom are engaged in the 100 octane aviation gasoline program.

"Dilution of technical staff by losses and subsequent replacement with inexperienced women and non-technical people has already resulted in reduction in volume and quality of essential war work and we expect the situation to get worse as the year progresses," Dr. Rather said.

At the National Bureau of Standards, Washington, there are about 80 out of a total personnel of 2,300 who are scientists 22 to 25 and most of these are in the new projects, many of them secret, that the Army and the Navy are pushing the hardest for results. Dr. E. C. Crittenden, assistant director, explained that mass induction would practically wipe out some research projects of a most important nature in radio and other elec-



CARPET OF DEATH—Steaming lava of Mt. Vesuvius is shown creeping towards the picturesque little town of San Sebastiano. The inhabitants of the Italian village were evacuated by Allied forces, and only deserted buildings remain in the path of destruction of the smoldering volcano. (See SNL April 1 and 15) Official U. S. Navy photograph.