

Draft Situation Viewed

We feel a certain dismay after reviewing President Johnson's recent proposals for changes in the draft laws. While we are not completely in accord with the present system, we feel that his plans would be poor, if not workable, substitute.

Admittedly, the greatest fault of the present system is its flagrant inequalities in administration. Higher education, the key to the strength of the nation, is unfortunately the present alternative to military service. Just as our colleges have an ample supply of young men avoiding the draft, our military forces do have some of those who could not afford a college education.

One of the major faults of the present system is the state of "limbo" into which most draftable males are placed. They do not know when and if they will be called. If nothing else, the President's plan would give the person a better idea of his status. The burden of service, however, would be placed on the 19-year-olds.

On the positive side, the individual, upon leaving the military would most likely have attained more maturity and also have a better idea of his direction. He no longer will have the question of "when will I go?" before him and will be able to make more effective plans for the future.

What we cannot accept is the manner of selection. We feel that the term "lottery" used to describe the selection method has a rather distasteful connotation as does the practice. The lottery is associated with gambling, something we would hate to do with the lives of our people. In effect we would be replacing selective inequalities with random inequalities. The lottery is in no way a suitable substitution.

A blanket proposal to do away with almost all "2S" deferments does not seem to be the answer either. If this provision is implemented, we would be faced with a critical shortage of professional and technical men in a few years. If we orient ourselves toward strictly military endeavors, then we must be prepared to let our industry, technology and professional service suffer. The alternate proposal, to allow those notified to elect to enter college now and continue until graduation or attainment of age 24 and then join the military if still needed seems a more realistic solution. In this way, those attending college or unable to attend have an equal burden but at a different age. We feel, however, that few young men are ready to make decisions at the age of 19 that will bind them possibly for the next seven years.

It is obvious that changes must be made in our present selective service laws, but we do not feel that President Johnson has come up with many worthwhile proposals. We would be in favor of working within the existing framework and making changes from there. Modifications of the present selection system can be implemented. Neither the selection by lot nor the inequalities of the old system appeals to us. More proposals must be aired before we can attempt to settle the question in the best interests of man and society.