LETTER FROM MARSTON MORSE

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November 8, 1941.

The object of this letter is to give to interested mathematicians a report concerning developments in the problem of the proper use of mathematicians of the draft age.

At a July meeting of the Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel[1] in Washington these matters were discussed at length and a number of those present, including the writer, urged that the Roster is the body best equipped to take up the problem of the proper use of scientists. It should be understood at the beginning of this letter that the Roster has no power to defer scientists, but is concerned only with making recommendations as to whether or not a man may be regarded as "necessary" in the sense of the law.

In order to make proper recommendations it was necessary that the Roster obtain considerable additional information concerning men of draft age on its lists. The matter of procedure has now been systematized. Any man who is on the Roster and who finds himself likely to be called may write the Roster for a standard questionnaire. Among other things this questionnaire seeks to find out the man's present occupation and scientific status and the names of references. These references and the man's employer are then sent questionnaires calculated to assist in determining whether the man may be regarded as "necessary."

The Roster than calls in men in the various scientific fields to review the assembled data and advise the Roster on each individual case. The mathematicians were the first so treated, and Murnaghan, Hotelling and Morse recently served as consultants for the Roster. The Roster had assembled excellent data bearing on 300 cases, each of which was carefully reviewed by each of the three mathematicians. In general we tried to follow the resolutions concerning deferment

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[1] The Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel, Washington, D. C., is a sufficient address.