

**BULLETIN
OF THE
AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY**

LETTER FROM MARSTON MORSE

Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey
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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 Personnel¹ 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 then 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

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

which were voted at the recent Chicago meeting of the mathematicians and are published in the Bulletin.

The Roster makes its recommendations to the Selective Service Headquarters, which in turn *may* pass on the recommendations to the local boards. The local boards are free to follow the recommendations or not. We shall know more about the practice a little later.

In case a man is inducted, the Roster acts in an advisory capacity to the personnel department of the Adjutant General's office, offering information which will aid the personnel officers in properly using the scientists on the Roster.

In addition to making recommendations as to individual men, the Roster also seeks information concerning shortages in various scientific fields and passes on this information to the Selective Service Headquarters and the Labor Office. Our Committee on the Supply and Demand for Mathematicians will materially aid the Roster in this respect, and will help to clarify the situation.

In conclusion I wish to recommend that problems of deferment or use of scientists on the Roster be taken up with the Roster whenever they arise. With the advice of consultants in the various fields, the Roster is the group best organized and equipped to handle these questions.

Very truly yours,
MARSTON MORSE