

Chairman PROXMIRE. We have had testimony from other economists that there is a serious shortage in skills in many areas of our country right now, today.

Would you anticipate that a substantial escalation might aggravate that shortage?

Mr. Wool. Well, I think what is particularly relevant is the fact that the draft age recently has been a median age of just about 20. This means that most of the boys who are not going to college have been coming into service in their 19th year of age. Those above their 20th birthday who have been drafted consist largely, I believe, of men who enter the draft-liable status after having been deferred for college—not necessarily all college graduates.

This means, too, that the drain upon the civilian economy has been least, because these are youngsters who, if they were employed before entering service, did not develop any appreciable degree of skill.

Chairman PROXMIRE. Maybe they were apprentices for a few months, and these are the kinds of people we need.

Mr. Wool. They could have been in some cases apprentices, but if they were in critical occupations they would have been deferred under the draft regulations. Now, in fact, the recommendations made by the Department of Defense and by the administration have been for stabilizing the draft age at a younger age, such as 19, for those who don't get college deferments, and that, of course, is still an open question.

And we believe that, among other things, the economic impacts of inducting men will be minimized by having them enter service at a point shortly after the time that they complete their schooling or at age 19, as distinct from alternative procedures, such as the one in effect in the past 10 years, of taking the oldest man first and having a median age as high, nearly, as age 24.

We think that given these facts as to the relative young age of the potential draftee, and his relatively limited skill, we do not believe that the drain in terms of skilled manpower, as against unskilled or semiskilled, was particularly noticeable in the past year.

Chairman PROXMIRE. I would like to ask Mr. Oi this question: Mr. Oi, you have given a fascinating presentation, and I think a very persuasive presentation, as to the prospects of at least reducing the impact of the draft, hopefully, sometime.

Do you see that the draft has any value in providing a much larger pool of trained, experienced manpower than we would have if you reduced the turnover as you describe it, and having people serve a longer time, but far fewer who would have this experience?

Mr. Oi. I see no danger in that whatsoever, because our policy in the past, which will probably persist into the future, is that once having served, a man will not be recalled to active duty. Except for the officer corps, this has pretty well been held to.

Chairman PROXMIRE. This certainly wasn't the understanding after World War II. As I recall, you were in the Reserves for 6 or 8 years, whether you liked it or not.

Mr. Oi. Yes.

Chairman PROXMIRE. If you were an officer, you weren't. You had the choice of getting out.