

(From the Congressional Record.)

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.  
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THAT OLD RAG MAN.

Do you remember that old rag man with the rickety wagon and skinny horse who drove up one alley and down another in your town and mine and in a resonant sing-song voice cried, "Rags and old iron, Rags and old iron." Perhaps he did not rate as one of the elite 400 in those days but today he becomes extremely important as one of the vanguard of national defense. Our steel mills must produce 82,000,000 tons of steel annually in order to meet the demands of defense. Bars, plates shapes, rods and a host of other forms of steel are indispensable to the building of ships, tanks, guns, and other military and naval instruments. To make this amount of steel requires about 30,000,000 tons of scrap. From whence comes this scrap? There are the farms and farm yards where worn out machinery is eligible for the scrap heap. There are the used-car graveyards where an estimated 4 to 7 million rusty chariots might each yield about 1500 pounds of iron and steel scrap, 20 pounds of aluminum and 60 pounds of copper and brass. Finally, there is that indescribable array of iron and steel lurking in backyards, cellars, attics and obscure corners of the land, ranging from rusty sewing machine frames to worn-out lawn mowers which might be gathered up, taken to the junk yards and then transported to the steel mills. But who shall gather it and haul it to the market. Upon whom must we depend for scrap that the steel mills might operate to capacity. Why, it's that old man with the rickety wagon and skinny horse with whose melody even the children are familiar as he sings, "Rags and old iron." He's part of defense.

DEBATERS' HANDBOOK ON DRAFT EXTENSION.

The Selective Service Act became law on September 16, 1940. It was approved in the House of Representatives by a vote of 263 to 149. It contains three limitations. The Draft Army is limited to 900,000 at any one time. Selectees shall serve for one year unless Congress extends the term because of a national emergency. Service of Selectees shall be limited to American possessions and to the Western Hemisphere. The new measure proposes that two of these limitations shall be modified or rubbed out entirely. The Draft Extension Bill proposes to remove the limit on the number of men in the Selective Service Forces so that if appropriations are available, it can become an army of unlimited size. The Bill also proposes to keep Selectees in service for an indefinite period. The U. S. Senate set a limit of 30 months but military authorities have consistently expressed a desire to retain men in service for the emergency which means an indefinite period. This Bill when reduced to its simplest terms, therefore, proposes a Selective Service Force of unlimited size for an indefinite period. Shall it be enacted into law?

THE CASE FOR THE BILL

The proponents of this measure contend that it should be enacted because

1. We are confronted with a serious emergency in the Orient, in South America and in Europe.
2. The Inductees only now after a period of 12 months training have developed real military value as a part of our defensive forces.

3. Discharging them at the end of 12 months would seriously disrupt the efficiency and morale of our present defense establishment.
4. Discharging them now would make it necessary to return some of the Selectees from the Occupation Forces at some of the vital new bases on the Atlantic Coast and in Alaska and would present a serious problem both in transportation and in impairing the strength of those occupying forces.
5. Congress has authority under the original Selective Service Act to retain Selectees for a longer period than one year if a national emergency warrants such action.
6. Discharging the Selectees now would leave the United States undefended.

THE CASE AGAINST THE BILL.

The Bill should be defeated say the opponents because

1. Retaining them in service would be a breach of faith not only with the inductees but with their families.
2. While it is true that the original Act provides that they may be retained by further legislation in the case of an emergency, this provision of the law was played down at the time of passage of original Act.
3. Spokesman in both Houses of Congress repeatedly asserted at the time of the passage of the Act that it was only for a period of one year and to retain them longer would be a breach of these assurances.
4. The Selectees are so distributed through our Armed Forces that only a small number would be relieved at the end of each month and their discharge would not impair our military efficiency. Figures indicate that slightly less than 14,000 would be eligible for discharge in November and slightly over 5500 in December.
5. If all of the 613,000 Selectees now in the Armed Forces were relieved at one and the same time, it would still leave a defense force of 750,000 composed of Regulars and National Guardsmen and that this force is adequate for all defense purposes.
6. The Selective Service Army should not be increased until the nation is more definitely advised what we propose to defend, where we propose to defend it and how we propose to defend it.
7. An Army of unlimited size would be an open invitation to become involved in the present war and send an American Expeditionary Force to foreign soil.
8. To rub out two of the three limitations in the original Act becomes a standing invitation to eliminate the other limitations which prevents ~~which prevents~~ these of Selectees beyond the Western Hemisphere and opens the door to the involvement in war.
9. Selectees are now so distributed among our defense forces both at home, in the islands and in our new bases that a very small percentage of the Regular Army would be required to replace them.