

Pathfinder

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The draft: agreement on 4 million ceiling



Rugged. Drafted 18-year-olds would get a tougher course.

Eighteen-year-olds were a little closer to the draft this week, and America was a step closer to a system of permanent Universal Military Training.

By a vote of 79 to 5, the Senate approved a bill to bring 18-year-olds under the draft (but only after all eligibles in the 19-26 age group have been taken), establish a two-year service period, create a UMT which would train all youths for at least six months when they turned 18, then keep them on reserve for about eight years thereafter. The bill would also set a 4 million ceiling on the Armed Forces.

Ready for Compromise. In the House, the Armed Services Committee agreed with the Senate on the 4 million ceiling, differed on other major points. For the Senate's draft at 18 the House group proposed a minimum age of 18½; for the Senate's two years of service, 26 months. The House wanted to give Congress much greater control than the Senate bill proposed: Congress would be able to declare the emergency over and institute UMT by concurrent resolution any time it pleased; it would also be able to end UMT by concurrent resolution whenever it saw fit, and the draft would end July 31, 1954.

After the House votes, the two measures will go to conference for final writing. Only then will America's young men know exactly where they stand.

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