

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Nixon has given thought to suspending the military draft at least for a while, but hasn't made up his mind yet, the White House indicated Tuesday.

Press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler declined to confirm or deny that it is a likely possibility in the near future. He said the idea has been talked about from time to time.

Ziegler said Nixon is in the midst of discussing with his aides draft reforms and possible executive orders or directives to change parts of the procedure.

"There's no firm decision at the moment on that," the press secretary said, without indicating

when it might come.

Ziegler made the comments when asked whether outright suspension of the draft is among alternatives Nixon is weighing in his discussion on the future of the Selective Service system.

Earlier, Sen. Hugh Scott, the acting Republican Senate leader, said the Nixon administration intends to press strongly for draft reform legislation this year.

"There is a strong disposition to press for draft reforms this year," the Pennsylvania senator told reporters after the weekly White House breakfast for Republican congressional leaders.

In contrast to legislation, which Scott mentioned, Ziegler was talk-

ing primarily about executive action Nixon might take under the present law. Suspending the draft is among the steps he can take without congressional action.

Prospects of Congress changing the law this year remain doubtful, although Nixon sent up his proposal months ago.

A Selective Service spokesman said the agency is conducting a review of administrative guidelines as requested by Nixon last May but it is not involved in considering any major changes in the system. Nor, the spokesman said, has draft headquarters received any word from the White House that such changes might be forthcoming.

Pentagon sources said either a suspension of draft calls or a reduction of calls is under consideration.

These sources suggested that Nixon might act by executive order if Congress does not pass reform legislation before the end of the current session, which may run into early December.

Defense authorities said a total halt in drafting for several months would probably have a more telling impact on the campuses, where the administration is hoping to damp down antiwar turbulence.

The possibility of a suspension of draft calls is tied in with plans to reduce the over-all

strength of the armed forces, and this in turn is related to the reduction of U. S. troops in Vietnam, sources said.

Officials cautioned that a halt in drafting might result in a drop-off in voluntary enlistments, unless it were made clear that the action was only temporary pending reform of the draft system.

If Congress does not act legislatively, these sources suggested, the President might by executive order direct that only 19-year-olds be drafted, rather than taking from the 19-26 bracket.

However, the President cannot move to a lottery system of drafting without specific legislation permitting it.

# Nixon Thinks Of Suspending Military Draft

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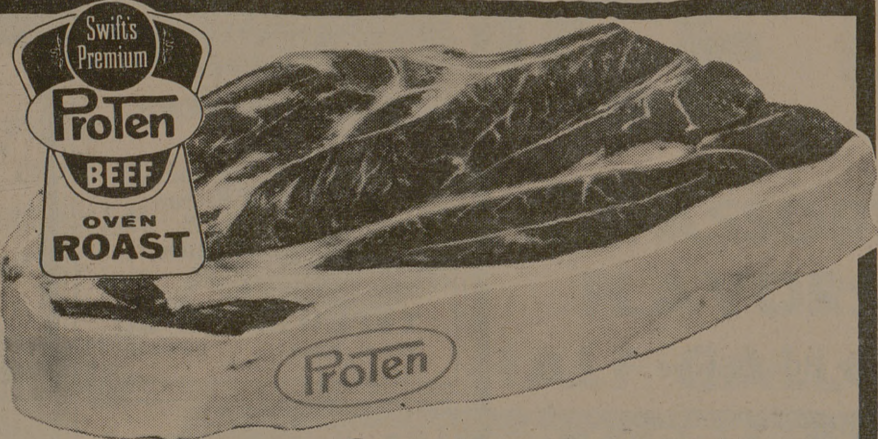
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