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Much Concern Over Call-Up

Hawaii County, facing the loss of more than 900 men in the call-up of National Guardsmen and Army reserves, seems to be taking the situation philosophically. As one businessman put it, "If it has to be, it has to be."

This is not to say that Big Islanders are not concerned. The sudden loss of 900 wage earners from a community our size, is a serious matter. With less than 10 per cent of the state's population, Hawaii County is providing about 20 per cent of the total of 4,129 men called up in the state. The 900 figure represents about 3 per cent of the Big Island's work force. The state is providing more than 17 per cent of the 24,500 national total.

Major concern here, of course, is for the families facing financial hardships, particularly those of Guardsmen in the lower ranks.

Business and industry, already in a tight labor situation, must cope with a manpower problem, particularly skilled workers. And the business community faces the loss of buying power among many Guard families.

County government operations will be affected to some extent, with the loss of some 40 persons in all departments.

A call-up of government, industry, business and community leaders appears in order to form a committee to seek ways to help alleviate financial hardships as they arise among the affected families and to help fill jobs in affected government and industry operations.

The Guardsmen and reservists will report to Schofield Barracks on Oahu by May 13. Their future destination is uncertain. It could be Vietnam or civil disturbance duty on the Mainland. Or they could remain at Schofield up to two years.

There is speculation that the Islanders will remain at Schofield, replacing troops needed soon in Vietnam.

But whatever the job ahead, our men will do their part. In the words of Governor Burns: "I don't believe the people of Hawaii have ever shirked their duty in case of necessity."