THAT FOUR-DAY WEEKEND AGAIN

As we have mentioned before in this column Thanksgiving Day at present is similar to Lincoln’s or Washington’s Birthday, just a day off to save a bunch of cash. Speaking of a bunch of students are able to miss their classes on Friday and Saturday without ill effect, others with laboratories which cannot be made up, and classes that must be attended, are forced to remain.

If the Friday and Saturday of the four-day weekend must be accounted for, the answer may lie along the following lines. A number of classes show the trend of the future; i.e., not to have for vacations on Fridays or Saturdays and return on Mondays. This means that it is not possible to make up for the Friday of the proposed four-day weekend by leaving a day later for home or by returning a day earlier. Since upperclassmen do not have Saturday classes, leaving a day later for Spring vacation, would, therefore, not be a substitute for Friday, November 25. This Saturday in the Spring, though, could take the place of the Saturday the freshmen have with the winter team in the Fall. This might mean a slight rearranging of the work covered during the two terms.

As a substitute for the Friday of the four-day weekend we suggest that registration be held on Saturday, rather than on Monday as it is now. The great majority of freshmen will be on campus having just finished Freshmen camp. Many of the upperclassmen will have also returned, some to take part in visiting others to get settled in their rooms.

Thanksgiving Day is a family holiday; it loses much of its significance spent away from home. We would still like to be home if possible, but not on November 21.

ECONOMY—MISGUIDED AND DISASTROUS

While it is commonplace to speak of “the shortage of trained engineers” in this country, the public figures who are responsible for the situation usually add and scientific manpower to the discussions of short supply. Working to alleviate this deficit of fundamental scientists is but one of the activities in which the National Science Foundation would engage. Yet, the House of Representatives has just tacked off $11 million from the Foundation’s request for funds of $14 million for the coming year.

That the Foundation has felt the axe is hardly to be wondered at when one considers the alacrity with which the present Congress wields the instrument. Considerations for the nation’s welfare seem to be unheeded. Like General Eisenhower, President Conant of Harvard, head of the Foundation’s executive board, has felt compelled to speak out publicly. “An example of wide misunderstanding of advances in pure science,” he said, what is the terms of the cut.

Months of time and hard work have been spent over the past year in developing the program for any misunderstanding. In 1947 the Steelman reported recommended the establishment of a science foundation authorized to spend $50 million during its first year of operation and $250 a million a year after the first year to reach the figure of $250 million by 1957. Such grand plans were short-lived. In May 1950, President Truman signed the bill setting up the Foundation and authorizing expenditures of $10,000,000 in the first year, with $20,000,000 annually to come evenly. When in November 1956, the House got around to putting up some cash, it pared the first year expenditures down to $10,000,000 and excised $11 million after the first year. The Foundation had become, for the time being, just another scholarship agency.

In the face of the advent of the Korean conflict probably made unavoidable some cuts in the initially planned expenditures for the Foundation; but the statement made at the time by the House-Senate Committee on the bill that the act “will not provide early aid to our defense effort” was silly. The country is in for a long struggle with Soviet totalitarianism, it has