Man and A Job

A recent decision of the MIT Administration resulted in a merger of two committees into one group, with the pattern of responsibility somewhat changed. It was hoped that this would be a more efficient way of handling the matter of national security. We take no issue with this decision, but we do note one serious side effect. In the process of the changeover on July 1, the duties of Harvey Burstein, the present Security Officer, will be cut from four days a week to two, and he will be relegated to tasks for which he is quite unqualified. This is a step in the wrong direction.

When our editorial of April 29 was published, we said, “We are happy that Harvey Burstein will still be on the MIT scene, but we are unhappy that this is the case for a long term to come.” We still hope so, but we are beginning to doubt that it will. Sooner or later, some other school or institution will want his services, and we shall lose a valuable employee. Mr. Burstein has always been willing to help along this line, in addition to his regular duties as Security Officer, and has met with considerable success. We respectfully recommend the retention of regular full time employment for Mr. Burstein completely. This, we feel, is a grave error.

It is an error, not only because Mr. Burstein is a good friend and a valuable employee, but also because of his interests at heart, but because he has been fulfilling a function in addition to his regular duties as Security Officer which, if not done, will be very much missed. This is as an informal legal adviser.

There is a vast group of problems and emergencies falling under the present categories of a person equipped to handle alone, and which requires the retention of regular legal help to plead a case. Anyone who has ever dealt with a resident of an institution, or who has ever been involved in any possible participant in an auto accident, or had insurance problems, or gotten in any kind of fiah to hot water with the local police will know that legal help is needed. In addition, there are many situations which are resolved to the best advantage of all concerned if not handled with publicity and court benefit.

At MIT, in the past two years, many people in pre-announcements such as those mentioned above have gone to Mr. Burstein for legal help. He has always been willing to help along this line, in addition to his regular duties as Security Officer, and has met with great success. We feel strongly that he should be retained as an informal legal adviser.

One other point: a part-time informal legal adviser for a body of people as large as the MIT community.

The fact that Mr. Burstein has been so busy in this capacity, and that it is a part of his regular job, is extremely valuable. In the case of the future Mr. Burstein himself, the next step at MIT in obtaining legal help is to go to the Institute’s law-yers. These people are understandable, no interested in spending their time instructing people in how to deal with landlords, insurance companies, etc. Their job is to prove formal legal documents. And, we feel that any first consultation with the Institute lawyers, the students lose a friend and that Mr. Burstein’s own way of so far as legal help is concerned.

Col. Gilbert G. Brinckerhof, head of MIT’s Department of Military Science, was appointed Professor of Military Science and Tactics in August 1937. When our editorial of April 29 was published, we said, “We are happy that Harvey Burstein will still be on the MIT scene, but we are unhappy that this is the case for a long term to come.” We still hope so, but we are beginning to doubt that it will. Sooner or later, some other school or institution will want his services, and we shall lose a valuable employee. Mr. Burstein has always been willing to help along this line, in addition to his regular duties as Security Officer, and has met with considerable success. We respectfully recommend the retention of regular full time employment for Mr. Burstein completely. This, we feel, is a grave error.