

End of Ford's

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Clemency

Program

Washington

President Ford's limited clemency program for Vietnam war objectors ends today, with the praise and criticism that launched it a year ago still sounding.

"We're quite pleased with the work the (presidential clemency) board has done," said Chairman Charles Goodell as its 18 members prepared to make their final recommendations to President Ford.

"The program has completely failed in all areas," said Warren Hoover, executive director of the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors. "Less than 20 per cent of the people eligible applied and many of them have since dropped out."

Both sides concede the program failed to reach vast numbers of young men who found themselves in legal jeopardy because of the war.

Mr. Ford announced the program Sept. 16, 1974.

Draft dodgers and deserters, including many young men who ran to Canada and Europe and still have not been indicted, were eligible to apply for generally low-paying, public service-type civilian jobs.

After serving for up to two years they would avoid prosecution or would receive a pardon.

Clemency recommendations have been going from the board to President Ford in packets of about 1000 recently, spokesman for the board said, and the vast majority of them should be on his desk when the board officially goes out of existence at midnight.

An "immunity from prosecution" amnesty bill, sponsored by Representative Robert Kastemeier (Dem-Wis.), which eliminates the alternate service requirements of the Ford program, has been cleared by a House judiciary subcommittee and is expected to come before the full judiciary committee in early October.