THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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VET BENEFITS UNDER HEAVY ATTACK

Of all major American Legion programs -- Americanism, child welfare, national security and rehab -- most newsworthy at this time is rehabilitation.

As we go to press, Congress convenes. According to all portents, it will hear President Eisenhower propose to:

(a) Virtually eliminate veterans' pensions by lowering income limitations; (b) reduce pensions still available by deducting social security benefits from them; (c) scrap the veterans' housing program; (d) make small lump settlements of future claims to veterans with war wounds not currently severe; (e) freeze number of available VA hospital beds.

If these proposals pass, 1958 could be the worst year for war veterans since 1933, with its Economy Act. See analysis of proposed cutbacks in the January American Legion Magazine (Page 27).

Ike's advisors have told him that these cuts are needed to help pay cost of meeting Soviet missile challenge.

In his Oklahoma City speech, Ike predicted the slash of vet benefits: "Some programs, while desirable are not absolutely essential ..." he said. "Some savings may still be squeezed out through the wringer method ... and the pressure groups will wail in anguish."

It is said the President will recommend budget cuts totaling one billion 813 million dollars. Of this, VA cuts would be $292 million ... Main targets are:

(a) One and one-half million war disabled vets in 10-20-30% disabled brackets; (b) non-service-connected disability pensions; (c) VA hospital beds.

"Much larger savings are contemplated for the fiscal year 1960," says an administration policy memo ... Since the President's Oklahoma speech, the administration has stepped up its tempo in preconditioning the public to expect a slash in veterans' benefits.

What's going to happen? Some predict a stalemate in 2nd session of 85th Congress. The Legion will seek pension improvements; the administration will seek pension slashes. Result may be a draw. Others believe the nation's veterans will have an uphill fight to hold the line.

Nat'l. Comdr. John S. Gleason, Jr., said: "The Legion questions hand-picking small segment of the population -- such as disabled vets to pay for the cost of meeting Soviet missile challenge."

With wetted finger tip testing big wind of economy, Robert M. McCurdy, Legion Nat'l. Rehab Chrmn., expressed official concern, stating the nation's welfare comes first after God in our minds and hearts. "The American Legion does not question the need to devote more federal funds to the weapons of the atomic age," he said. "It does question using such a need as a sneak attack on veterans' benefits. It is obvious that the Bureau of the Budget and the administration considered such reductions long before Sputnik. If they have their way, veterans' benefits will also be out of this world."

Stands for Adequate Modern Security

For many, organizations and individuals, the Oct. 4, 1957, Sputnik's orbit signaled "about face" in their previous program for "less defense and lower taxes." They are now crying for more scientists, more money and more U.S. missle progress.

> The American Legion's position that national security takes precedence over national economy is well known. We have maintained this stand for 39 years.

In action taken at our national convention The American Legion security objectives are spelled out: Adequate funds for our Armed Forces, assuring consistent manpower policies; top effectiveness, development and production of modern weapons; strengthen Civil Defense.

> Convention mandates call for: support of the Cordiner Committee report; urge adoption of the Single Catalog system; extension of Selective Service Act; reactivation of National Security Training Commission; amending uniform code of military justice.

It should be noted that in backing the Cordiner Committee report, objective is improved combat capabilities of our Armed Forces, resulting in savings of billions of dollars annually. Additional defense savings estimated at more than $4 billion dollars would also result with use of the single catalog system as specified by Legion-backed Public Law 436.

> Sudden thought: More than 744,000 scientists owe their college training to the G.I. Bill of Rights, sponsored solely by The American Legion.

It's Your Money --

Annual dues entitles each Legionnaire to 12 issues of The American Legion Magazine. Delayed membership renewals each fall make members miss issues and involve expense to entire membership, incurred by removing names from subscription list then replacing them after tardy renewal. This annual cost is a large figure. Unpaid subscriptions cannot be kept on active list under Audit Bureau of Circulation rules.

> American Legion Magazines undelivered because addresses are no longer current incur large annual expenses borne by the entire American Legion. Change of address procedure appears on Contents page of each issue of the magazine.

Economics --

Older workers still find it tough to get jobs ... And when a man over 40 loses a job it can be a disaster ... American Legion Economic Commission seeks better recognition of oldsters in job market ... Post may find ways to help older veteran job seekers as part of their programs, the Commission suggests.

Americanism Aims for 1957 --

"Stars and Stripes on Display," Flag etiquette film produced by Indiana University, makes a fine community service project ... Film pamphlet is available through your department ... Radio and TV announcement cards and slides pointing up Flag display are also available.

> Now is the time for posts to plan participation in the National High School Oratorical Contest. Contact your state headquarters for 1958 contest plans. Presentation of school medal awards is another good Americanism project for posts. Contact your school officials now.

Nat'l. Chrmn. James F. Daniel, Jr., announced 1958 legislative objectives for Americanism: Investigate Fund for Republic; oppose weakening or repeal of McCarran-Walter Immigration Act; oppose educational activities of UNESCO and urge Congressional investigation of same; continue to oppose federal aid for education.

> Recent NEC meeting adopted resolution urging departments to work with educators to the end that every public and private secondary school will "institute as a part of their regular curriculum ... courses designed to deepen understanding of and loyalty to American democratic ideal and institutions and expose the fallacies of Communism."

Chrmn. Daniel explained, "The American Legion has always been interested in education and in the role of the schools as citizenship training institutions in particular. We don't believe that we can have politically mature citizens in the future unless they have a basic knowledge of Communistic evils over the last few decades. A careful study is being made of this problem to determine the best methods to employ in carrying out the intent of this resolution."

> Tom Peake, Norton, Va., 1957 Boys Nation president, was a keynote speaker at the recent national Boys State conference held in Indianapolis, Nov. 16.

The NEC approved proposal of Americanism Commission to hold 12 Regional Conferences. Purpose is to re-emphasize existing Americanism programs. Members of the Commission will arrange the meetings. Dates to be announced later.

> Date for nationwide ABC telecast of Legion's 'Back to God' program is tentatively set for Feb. 2 ... Check with your ABC outlet to see if they will carry it 'live' or on Kinescope at later date ...

Lou Brissie, AL Junior Baseball Commissioner, announced that he hoped to have 1958 Junior Baseball Handbooks in the mail to all departments by Jan. 25. He advised posts to make initial contact with junior baseball sponsors early in February.

For further information write to A.L. Nat'l. Newsletter care of National Public Relations Division.

Emphasis on Education --

Top child welfare goal when Congress meets in 1958 will be to secure passage of the Veterans' Children Scholarship Act. The bill, S-2737 introduced by Senator George Smathers, Florida, would earmark $100 million dollars of confiscated war alien property held by the U.S. for investment in interest bearing securities. Earnings would provide priority and scholarships to qualified veterans' children in the fields of teaching, science and technology. Remaining scholarships would go to other eligible youngsters.

> Bill would not invoke expenditure of tax funds. Legitimate war claims could still be paid from $100 million principal fund, if other alien property funds were exhausted.

Survey --

Recent national convention directs Child Welfare Commission to initiate a study of residence laws and their implications to veterans and their dependents. Child Welfare Division is undertaking this survey through contacts with departments and various national organizations. Nearly half of today's mobile population is made up of veterans and their families. Posts should report denials of benefits to veterans due to resident requirements.

Missing a Bet --

Morris "Bob" Nooner, Jr., Plymouth, Ill., Education and Scholarship chairman reports a major source of educational assistance not being fully utilized. The Child Welfare Division estimates $8 million went begging last year under the provisions of the War Orphans Assistance Act or "Junior G.I. Bill." Figure is based on those eligible to use Act and number of applicants.

> Posts and units are urged to interest war orphans entering high school, advise them of benefits and the importance of early planning for higher education. More than 156,000 children of war veterans who died in, or as a result of disease or injury incurred in war service are eligible. Maximum payments, $110 per month up to 36 months.

Upcoming National Welfare Conferences: Area A -- New England States Conference, Eastland Hotel, Portland, Me., Jan. 10-11, 1958. Area B -- Middle Atlantic States Conference, Thayer Hotel, West Point, N. Y., Jan. 23-25, 1958. All Legionnaires in these states are urged to attend.

Public Relations --

Posts are getting in their 2¢ worth on the hometown public relations front ... that's what it costs them for a copy of the new comic booklet, "Saved By The Bell," -- when ordered in 1,000 or more quantities from Nat'l. Emblem Division, plus 10% handling. Written for the general public, it tells the Legion story well. Orders were close to a half-million in January.

Legislation -- How You Can Help --

American Legion legislative success is greatly dependent upon an active, informed and interested membership. Some of the principal resolutions calling for legislative action -- adopted at our national convention -- are mentioned elsewhere on these pages. Others will be underscored in later Newsletter editions.

> Best way to keep current on veterans' legislation is to subscribe to the National Legislative Bulletin. At $3.00 yearly rate, it is published semi-monthly and available to all posts, units and individual Legionnaires. Write to Miles D. Kennedy, Nat'l. Legislative Director, The American Legion, 1608 K St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

A convention mandate names 1957-58 as "Veterans' Legislation Year -- only with grass root interest and action in the support of veterans' legislation can it be truly so.

Membership News --

At press time Legion membership returns were not all in for Annual Telegraphic Roll Call ... Nat'l. Comdr. Gleason was hopeful departments would keep pledge made for Dec. 31 deadline of 1,761,945 ... Only North Dakota had topped the 100% mark ... More than 10,000 Legionnaires had enrolled 12 or more 1958 members to earn a "Gleason Gunner" miniature howitzer award ... First lesson for six months Legion leadership correspondence course was in the mail, Jan. 1, with close to 4,000 enrolled in 12th term American Legion Extension Institute.

Foreign Relations --

Soviet rocket development foreshadowed new concepts for U.S. Foreign Relations according to a report made to NEC by Legion Foreign Relations Chrmn. Rogers Kelley (Texas). He called for realism and readiness for sacrifice in a planetary struggle for survival.

> Newly appointed Chrmn. Addison P. Drummond, (Fla.) announced a meeting of the Foreign Relations Commission, April 9-11 in Washington, D.C.

Nat'l. convention action asked for: support of Bricker Amendment; opposition to foreign aid for nations linked with Russia, Red China or other communist nation; creation of a board to plan "Cold War" operations; no return of seized enemy assets.

> Legion foreign relations policy urges that all foreign aid expenditures be clearly separated and accounted for by our government; continues to oppose recognition of Red China; opposes disarmament talks with Russia as untrustworthy.

A special Foreign Relations and Security subcommittee resolution requests U.S. revised Status of Forces Treaty for purpose of protecting rights of U.S. Armed Forces abroad.

Farewell to a Friend

The American Legion regrets the resignation of Mr. Harvey Higley as Administrator of Veterans Affairs. "Doc" Higley, as he is affectionately known to thousands, has served the veteran group in the above capacity for more than 4 years. He has done his job well and we have the feeling that he leaves because he would have no part of the anti-veteran plans that are simmering today. As an Administration appointee he could be inhibited. But we know veterans will have a strong friend outside of government. We wish him well. -- from Nat'l. Legislative Bulletin

Interim appointment of Sumner G. Whittier, former Lt. Gov. of Mass., as Higley's successor was announced December 17th.

Attention Legionnaires --

More than 22,000 Legionnaire owned retail stores from coast to coast proudly display the emblem of The American Legion Magazine Retail Advisory Council. The stores displaying this emblem are owned and operated by fellow-Legionnaires who deserve your support. So look for this emblem when you're out to shop and spend your shopping dollars with confidence at the sign of honest and friendly service.

Note to Legionnaire Retailers: For FREE membership in the AL Magazine Retail Advisory Council see application form on Page 47 of your AL Magazine.

Dates to Remember --

Jan. 7 - 2nd Session of 85th Congress convenes.

14-16 - Nat'l. Legislative Commission meeting, Washington, D.C.

15 - Legislative dinner for U.S. Congress.

15 - Nat'l. Religious Emphasis Committee meeting.

16-17 - Department Chaplains Conference -- both at Indianapolis.

17-19 - Area C Rehab-Economic Conference, Jung Hotel, New Orleans, La.

23-25 - Area E Rehab-Economics Conference, Phoenix, Ariz.

Feb. 2 - Four Chaplains Day.

3-9 - Nat'l. Boy Scout Week.

25 - Nat'l. Rehab Commission meeting, Washington, D.C.

25-28 - Nat'l. Rehab Conference, Hotel Statler, Washington, D.C.

Mar. 15-17 - American Legion Birthday.

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For Additional Information On All Programs Write To National Public Relations Division

ROUTE TO:

FORM 3547 REQUESTED

Birth of A Brain Child -- *The American Legion NATIONAL NEWSLETTER -- a new publication designed for Legion leaders -- makes its bow this month. Objective is to provide information on the status and progress of current and basic American Legion programs.*