

if—in short—something is not done—and done soon—to insure law and order.

Kooks and cowards have a right to their kookiness and a right to be cowardly in the privacy of their own kennels. They have no right to cripple the progress of our Nation and the pursuit of its legitimate policies in peace as well as war.

A man who burns his draft card or who counsels others to do so is in clear violation of the law of the land and must be prosecuted.

If there is no law to prohibit burning of the American flag, there definitely ought to be. The flag is more than a piece of silk or cloth. It is a symbol of all we honor and cherish.

It is heartening to know that the House of Representatives has already passed and sent to the Senate two bills to curb some of these manifestations of idiocy. I am referring to H.R. 10480 which would make the burning of or malicious damage to the flag a Federal crime, and H.R. 421 which would impose severe penalties for using interstate communications to incite, organize, and promote a riot.

We realize that proposals of this nature invariably invite controversy as to their constitutionality. We do not profess to be expert in constitutional law. But when anarchy becomes a way of life for certain individuals, and when people who obey the law suffer outrages beyond the point of endurance, we think a legislative solution to the problems must be found. The DAV sees the provisions of H.R. 10480 and H.R. 421 as steps in this direction and we earnestly hope the full Congress will soon concur.

Before turning to our own national convention resolutions, Mr. Chairman, there is another matter demanding brief comment.

We would be remiss if we did not at this time express our deep appreciation to this committee, and to the Congress, for your prompt and favorable response to the historic recommendations made a year ago by President Johnson in his unprecedented veterans message to the first session of the 90th Congress. The message was the first of its kind but, as we all know, it was not the last.

Later on in this testimony I shall address myself to the newest veterans' message received by Congress; but it is only fair, I think, to recap here the results of that first message. There's never any shortage of people telling you what you've done wrong. So I think it's only fair to have someone tell you occasionally what you've done right.

Among other things—

You have expanded educational allowance under the GI bill.

You have widened opportunities for veterans with educational shortcomings.

You have eliminated inequities in the treatment of Vietnam veterans.

You have given substantial pensions boosts to some 2 million disabled veterans, widows, and dependents.

In short, you took the recommendations of the President's first veterans' message and contributed much to the comfort and well-being of those who, in the President's own words, "have brought greater justice and decency to the world."

Yet as always there is unfinished business. We hope, for example, that the Senate will quickly pass H.R. 12555 which the House approved last December. It is needed to protect pension rights against