

budget was an attempt to measure a modest but adequate standard of living.

From the foregoing, it is manifest that a veteran who, because of service-incurred disability, is disabled to the degree that precludes gainful employment, could not, with the \$300 compensation received monthly from the Veterans' Administration, meet the cost of maintaining himself and his family under prevailing standards of what is necessary for health, nutrition, and participation in community activities.

Mr. Chairman, the American Legion strongly urges your committee's consideration of increasing the monthly rate for 100 percent disability to \$400. This increased amount, with the added compensation for those with dependents, and other Veterans' Administration benefits available, would assist him materially in meeting the cost of living in today's economy in the United States within a standard of living which is not demeaning to his status as a veteran.

Secondly, increase a widow's monthly rate of dependency and indemnity compensation by \$25 for each child.

Dependency and indemnity compensation is the monthly payment made by the Veterans' Administration to a widow, child, or parent, because of a service-connected death. Under existing provisions, the payment to the widow is at a monthly rate equal to \$120 plus 12 percent of the basic military pay of her deceased husband. With some exceptions, widows with children under the age of 18 do not receive additional dependency and indemnity compensation for the children. This provision of the Servicemen's and Veterans' Survivors' Benefits Act is a distinct departure from the traditional method of providing survivor benefits for widows with children.

In the foregoing discussion of the need for increasing compensation payments to the totally disabled, we cited the budget needs of families as developed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. There is no reason to believe that the needs of a family unit headed by a widow are less than those that may be headed by a veteran.

We urge your consideration of legislation to amend the dependency and indemnity compensation provisions of title 38, United States Code, to provide that the widow's monthly rate shall be increased by \$25 for each child under the age of 18 years.

An inequity of the present provisions is illustrated further, to a degree, by the fact that a widow with three children may receive as little as \$132 monthly. Yet, on her remarriage, although payments to her as a widow are discontinued, as custodian of three children of the veteran and while they are under 18, she would receive \$149 in their behalf.

Third, development and maintenance of an adequate system of national cemeteries.

A division of our country's legislative and executive jurisdiction over national cemeteries has led, we believe, to the absence of a clear policy on the present and future development of a system of national cemeteries. As a result, in most areas of the country, burial of war veterans, or of those who die in service, cannot be made in a national cemetery that may conveniently be visited by the next of kin. Constructive action should be taken soon or this privilege will be denied to all who have served in its Armed Forces.