

I also expect before August to pass a bill that will be of some benefit to our widows and orphans.

This will be a very busy year for our committee and I hope that many of the things that you talked about in your statement will be carried out.

Mr. Commander, I would like to ask you about your statement that, "We are also alarmed at the increasing evidence that medical care for veterans is not keeping pace with the high standards of university-type hospitals."

Could you comment on that? Do you really believe that?

Mr. SCERRA. Mr. Chairman, this part of my statement refers to the biennial report by your committee that indicates shortcomings in many VA hospitals. If I am not mistaken, through this questionnaire, to managers of VA hospitals.

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. Yes, sir.

Mr. SCERRA. Your committee has found the basis for improving the care of veterans. This is what was meant by that part of my statement, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. I wondered if the VFW had gone into this in more detail than the committee has.

Mr. SCERRA. I do know that we have staff people in our Washington office who are familiar with this problem, who are conducting inspections of VA hospitals. Maybe our director of our Washington office, Cooper T. Holt, could give you more information on this matter, if you would care to hear it.

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. I would care to hear it.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, we have six men in the field all the time inspecting VA facilities. As a matter of fact, this last month we have armed them with cameras to inspect the hospitals and report back to us on their findings.

These reports are given to the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs every time a report is prepared, usually two or three times a week.

So we have found, Mr. Chairman, much still needs to be done regarding medical treatment of our veterans in our VA hospitals. We can substantiate our position and recommendations, I believe, with the reports our fieldmen give to us every week, which in many instances provides information not already available to you.

Mr. TEAGUE of Texas. Mr. Commander, one last thing. I'm sure you know that all national cemeteries that are active cemeteries have been turned over to this committee for supervision. We are going to have very complete hearings from A to Z on cemeteries.

I think from talking to members of my committee that all of them agree completely with what the President said, that any veteran should have a chance to be buried in a national cemetery close to his home. This really is not as simple as it looks. We have been gathering information within the committee ever since this resolution passed the Congress this last year, and the answers are not easy to come by.

It is a very expensive program, much more expensive than I ever thought it was. I personally would hope that we might come up with a reasonable expansion of our present national cemetery system. I would also hope that we could come up with some incentive to a man who did want to be buried in his private plot, as many do. But our