

to share the feelings expressed by you, Mr. Chairman, in your letter of October 23, 1967, to the national commanders in which you said:

Our country is in a horrible and dirty war in Vietnam. The American fighting men there deserve the full support of the American people. They are not receiving it.

Because of this tremendous cost, we realize that there is a limit to funds that are presently available for veterans' benefits and that the big problem that faced the Veterans Advisory Commission in its recommendations, your committee in its thinking, and the U.S. Congress in its actions is how best to do the most good with the moneys available.

Recognizing this problem, AMVETS feels that prime consideration must be given to the problems of immediate need but that secondary consideration should be focused toward improving the present benefits system in conjunction with establishing overall long-range goals for all veteran programs.

In perhaps what might be considered the order of their importance, we shall review for you the feelings of AMVETS with regard to specific legislation which we believe should be given special consideration in this session of the 90th Congress.

COMPENSATION

In continuation of our beliefs that the service-connected disabled veterans and their dependents deserve top priority, we recommend the following:

1. That the basic compensation rate payable to the service-connected totally disabled veteran be increased by \$100 monthly to a total of \$400.

A recent survey made in connection with the validation of the disability rating schedule confirmed that the average earning capacity of the totally disabled veteran had to be set at zero. This means a complete reliance of the totally disabled veteran on his disability compensation for economic support. The present rate of \$300 a month does not allow a totally disabled veteran to begin to maintain a standard of living comparable to that which he would have enjoyed except for his service-connected disabilities.

2. AMVETS recommends an increase in the compensation rates payable to veterans whose disabilities are evaluated from 10 to 90 percent.

The most recent compensation rate increase was made effective on December 1, 1965. According to the Consumer Price Index, there has been a 5.9-percent increase in the cost of living between that time and October 1, 1967.

We feel that the disabled veterans' compensation rates must be adjusted to protect them from the economic disadvantages which result from constant increases in the cost of living.

3. AMVETS recommends that the payments of disability compensation should be on the same ratio to 100 percent as the degree of disability is to 100 percent—10 percent of \$300 equals \$30.

In keeping with our beliefs that the disabled should receive top priority, and fully realizing the cost involved with this plan, we believe that its importance dictates that we address ourselves to this change now. We believe that regularity of intervals should be restored