

**STATEMENT OF W. ED HUDSON, NATIONAL QUARTERMASTER OF
THE VETERANS OF WORLD WAR I OF THE U.S.A.**

Mr. DORN. The Chair would like to state that our next witness, National Commander Philip O'Brien, of the Veterans of World War I, has been called out of the city and could not be with us this morning. Also, the national legislative director recently, I believe, had a heart attack and he is not with us and we wish for him a very quick and speedy recovery, but we are happy to have with us this morning Mr. W. Ed Hudson, national quartermaster of the Veterans of World War I, and we are certainly glad to have you and you have a statement, I see, which is rather brief, and you may proceed in any manner you wish.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of this distinguished committee. Four of the five points in our legislative program have been recommended by the President's Veterans' Advisory Commission. We definitely feel, considering the very low income of our group of veterans of World War I, that social security or public and private retirement plans should not be counted as income against the veteran for pension purposes.

We fully realize that this could change drastically in connection with the veterans of World War II or veterans from later wars in the sense that social security and other incomes could be considerably increased from what they are at the present time, and most of the veterans of World War II will not reach the age of 65 for approximately 20 years.

We are particularly concerned at the present time with the law that says that the veterans shall fill out an income questionnaire once a year. This has become a terrific burden on the aging veteran of World War I. In thousands of cases, these veterans are not able to drive a car, nor are they able to use other modes of transportation available to consult the county service officer with regard to filling out these income questionnaires.

With H.R. 12555 becoming a law January 1, 1969, these veterans are going to be more confused than ever, and many of them will have their pensions stopped simply because they do not know how to compute their income with the addition of the increase in social security.

There is no justification in the national commander's mind or in the minds of the Veterans of World War I for such a program to be continued. It is not reasonable to expect that a veteran of 72, after filing an income questionnaire for 2 years previous, would have any source of revenue that would increase his income for pension purposes.

It is a known fact that the World War I pensioner is faced with the increased cost of drugs and medicines which has eaten into his pension, in some cases, 25 percent, so we request that after the age of 72, if he has been on the pension rolls for 2 years, his income questionnaire be eliminated.

The administration of the income questionnaire is estimated to cost the Government \$5 million a year. We would like to refer you to a bill that has just recently been introduced by Hon. William C. Wampler, of Virginia, H.R. 16141, which covers this provision.

We also feel very definitely, and we feel very strongly, that the pauper's oath has no place in any veteran's program. In the Veterans'