

The 11 of us represent all of the major veterans' organizations, all sections of the country, all ages of veterans except the very youngest, and both major political parties. While we have not achieved unanimity on every item, we have reached a consensus. We would like to emphasize not our detailed recommendations but our basic findings on the nature of the mutual relationship between the veteran and his country.

I can think of no better way of emphasizing this than to quote the first part of the introduction to our report. [Reads:]

The contribution of the veteran to the building of this nation during its first two centuries makes clear how important the role of the veteran must and will be to the future existence and growth of our society.

In the future that service may take new and different form but its significance will remain unaltered. The security of this nation is based on the commitment of those citizens who have served in the uniformed forces of our country.

This contribution on their part has nearly always involved the loss of economic opportunity; often it has required the sacrifice of the veteran's health, and in many instances it has cost the supreme sacrifice, life itself.

The strength and prestige of this nation depends upon this continued contribution. The future status of this country depends on the mutual obligations and commitment between the Government and its citizens.

As a return to veterans for their service, the nation has accepted three basic principles as fundamental commitments to the veteran population. They may be defined generally as follows:

(1) The commitment to compensate (a) disabled veterans for disability incurred in their nation's service, and (b) veterans' dependents for the loss of life or earning capacity of the veteran.

(2) The commitment to promote the rehabilitation and readjustment to civilian life of those veterans who have suffered physical or economic loss because of their service to the nation.

(3) The commitment to care for needy veterans who cannot be completely rehabilitated.

We have found that the individual veteran is deeply concerned that these mutual obligations be kept in mind. The veteran of this country's wars is very conscious of his status as a veteran.

The Commission has concluded that veterans' programs are largely fulfilling the Nation's responsibilities to its veterans and their dependents. Great credit is due both to the executive and legislative branches of our Federal Government for their activities in this regard.

We are especially grateful to President Johnson for the lead that he has taken in veterans' affairs. The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs has always exercised earnest, determined effort on behalf of the American veteran, not only under its present chairman but under his distinguished predecessors.

The legislation that has originated in this committee in recent years under Chairman Teague has been especially noteworthy. The Commission is very grateful for the interest that the chairman, other members of this committee, and other members of Congress have shown throughout the year we have been developing our report.

After our many hearings and subsequent deliberations the Commission arrived at certain general conclusions. These are:

1. Military service in times of national stress constitutes the highest response to the obligations of citizenship and should continue to be the basis of a reciprocal obligation on the part of the Nation to provide reasonable assistance to veterans commensurate with the greater sacri-