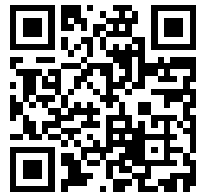

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>



FURNISHING AUTOMOBILES TO DISABLED VETERANS

**STANFORD
LIBRARIES**

P171-92

HEARINGS
BEFORE A
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE
UNITED STATES SENATE
EIGHTIETH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
ON
BILLS RELATIVE TO FURNISHING AUTOMOBILES
TO DISABLED VETERANS

MAY 12 AND 13, 1947

Printed for the use of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare



UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1947

62247

2719AS011

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE

ROBERT A. TAFT, Ohio, *Chairman*

GEORGE D. AIKEN, Vermont

ELBERT D. THOMAS, Utah

JOSEPH H. BALL, Minnesota

JAMES E. MURRAY, Montana

H. ALEXANDER SMITH, New Jersey

CLAUDE PEPPER, Florida

WAYNE MORSE, Oregon

ALLEN J. ELLENDER, Louisiana

FORREST C. DONNELL, Missouri

LISTER HILL, Alabama

WILLIAM E. JENNER, Indiana

IRVING M. IVES, New York

PHILIP R. RODGERS, *Clerk*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETEBANS' AFFAIRS

WAYNE MORSE, *Chairman*

JOSEPH H. BALL

ELBERT D. THOMAS

IRVING M. IVES

CLAUDE PEPPER

WILLIAM E. JENNER

LISTER HILL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ALPHABETICAL LIST OF WITNESSES

	Page
Adams, H. P., executive secretary, Blinded Veterans Association, New York, N. Y.-----	33
Barnes, William S., first sergeant, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	19
Blinded Veterans Association, statement of, in re automobiles for disabled veterans-----	47
Bradley, Gen. Omar N., Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, Veterans' Administration, Washington, D. C.-----	1
Camp, Quintus E., assistant national director for claims, DAV, Washington, D. C.-----	27
Grout, Albert M., Jr., sergeant, Forest Glen section, Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	21
Kennedy, Thomas, Baltimore, Md.-----	31
La Fountains, Noah J., private, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	21
Merriman, Russell, corporal, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	21
Newcomb, Elliott H., national legislative director, AMVETS, Washington, D. C.-----	36
Paterson, Chat, national legislative representative, AVC, Washington, D. C.-----	43
Rogers, Hon. Edith Nourse, Representative in Congress from the State of Massachusetts-----	24
Salkin, Murray, Baltimore, Md.-----	32
Shiple, Garnett W., first sergeant, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	17
Stevens, Charles W., assistant national rehabilitation director, the American Legion, Washington, D. C.-----	44
Taylor, Anthony, national service officer trainee, DAV, Washington, D. C.-----	22
Williamson, John C., assistant legislative director, VFW, Washington, D. C.-----	40

II. CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF WITNESSES

Monday, May 12, 1947:	
Gen. Omar N. Bradley, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, Veterans' Administration, Washington, D. C.-----	1
Garnett W. Shipley, First sergeant, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	17
William S. Barnes, first sergeant, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	19
Russell Merriman, corporal, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	21
Albert M. Grout, Jr., sergeant, Forest Glen Section, Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	21
Noah J. La Fountaine, private, Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C.-----	21
Anthony Taylor, national service officer trainee, DAV, Washington, D. C.-----	22
Hon. Edith Nourse Rogers, Representative in Congress from the State of Massachusetts-----	24
Quintus E. Camp, assistant national director for claims, DAV, Washington, D. C.-----	27
Thomas Kennedy, Baltimore, Md.-----	31
Murray Salkin, Baltimore, Md.-----	32

Tuesday, May 13, 1947:

	Page
H. P. Adams, executive secretary, Blinded Veterans Association, New York, N. Y.-----	33
Elliott H. Newcomb, national legislative director, AMVETS, Washington, D. C.-----	36
John C. Williamson, assistant legislative director, VFW, Washington, D. C.-----	40
Chat Paterson, national legislative representative, AVC, Washington, D. C.-----	43
Charles W. Stevens, assistant national rehabilitation director, the American Legion, Washington, D. C.-----	44
Blinded Veterans Association, statement of, in re automobiles for disabled veterans-----	47

FURNISHING AUTOMOBILES TO DISABLED VETERANS

MONDAY, MAY 12, 1947

UNITED STATES SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS OF THE
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE,
Washington, D. C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a. m., in the committee room, Capitol Building, Senator Joseph H. Ball presiding.

Present: Senators Ball (presiding) and Jenner.

There was present before the subcommittee Hon. Edith Nourse Rogers, a Representative in Congress from the State of Massachusetts. Senator BALL. The hearing will come to order.

General Bradley, we shall be very happy to hear from you at this time.

STATEMENT OF GEN. OMAR N. BRADLEY, ADMINISTRATOR OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS, VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON, D. C.

General BRADLEY. Mr. Chairman, the last session of Congress voted to provide automobiles for those disabled veterans of World War II whose injuries to their legs seriously restricted their travels. You now have before you several bills which would also grant automobiles to another and broader group of disabled veterans from all previous wars and the peacetime service.

In seeking to determine the desirability of these new proposals, I have limited my judgment to the value of automobiles in the sound and successful rehabilitation of disabled veterans. I believe this is the only reasonable yardstick that can be applied to any of these bills. We are not involved in a question of what the veteran does or does not deserve. If we sought to justify this grant on the basis of our debt to disabled veterans, we could add a garage, a house, and furniture, and still fall pathetically far short of payment. For there is no adequate reward that can repay a man for the loss of an arm, a leg, or his health.

The primary responsibility of our Government toward disabled veterans is to heal them during their convalescence, to guide them in training, and to help them in finding normal, useful, and remunerative lives. If it is shown that the grant of automobiles is vital to the successful rehabilitation of these disabled men, then it can be urged we have reason to provide them.

On the other hand, if this grant is to be viewed as a token of the Nation's debt, then we must question the soundness of these proposals. I bear in mind that it is far easier to support these bills than to oppose

them. And I recognize that any proposal which would benefit the veteran directly is not easily disputed by logic and by reason.

Even the cost of these proposals is of secondary importance. For while the cost is substantial, it nevertheless amounts to only a bare fractional part of our total expenditure for veterans. And where the particular needs of seriously disabled veterans are concerned, those needs should not be measured in terms of what they cost.

In examining these bills, we must first concern ourselves with the principles of their proposals. In light of the objectives of our program, we must determine whether they will contribute soundly and equitably to the rehabilitation and welfare of disabled veterans.

If this then is to be the basis of our judgment, let us first consider the objectives and character of Government aid to disabled veterans.

Where an injury has impaired the employability of a veteran, we have sought to restore his usefulness by helping him to conquer his handicap and find self-confidence in a promising and productive job. This is the process known as rehabilitation. It is normally accomplished through three distinct but integral programs.

The first is medical care and hospitalization. We do not release a veteran for return to his community until first we have exhausted our medical resources in his treatment. After discharge and throughout his entire lifetime, we provide facilities where he may secure expert medical care and hospitalization. Where prosthetic appliances are required, we not only pay the cost of that equipment, but we assume responsibility for its maintenance and replacement as long as the veteran lives.

The second is vocational training. We seek to restore men to occupations and careers where their injuries will be least disabling and their handicaps least confining. We not only assist the veteran in defining his job objective, but we bear the cost of his training, including subsistence during that time.

The third is compensation. In addition to helping sustain the disabled veteran during his period of training, we continue to pay him compensation afterward to help offset his possible loss of earning power. The rates of compensation are furthermore increased to defray extra costs of their special needs. Blind and paralytic veterans, for instance, and veterans suffering from amputations are paid compensation at rates which presumably enable them to afford the extra services they require.

In voting Public Law 663, the Seventy-ninth Congress apparently determined that this rehabilitation program did not fully satisfy the peculiar needs of those veterans who had suffered permanent disabling leg injuries in World War II. By the provisions of that law, Congress authorized the Government to pay for vehicles purchased by that group of disabled veterans. The group was limited to those who were receiving compensation for the loss, or the loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle.

It specified that the cost per vehicle was not to exceed \$1,600. It did not permit partial payment by the Government on vehicles costing more than \$1,600. And although \$30,000,000 was appropriated for these purchases, no provision was made to obligate those funds beyond June 30, 1947.

Unfortunately, no provision was made to extend the benefits of that law to those disabled veterans whose injuries prevented their release before that time from Army and Navy hospitals.

In limiting automobiles to those veterans whose leg injuries seriously impaired their freedom of travel, Congress indicated that it regarded those vehicles as prosthetic appliances. This conclusion is substantiated in the requirement that veterans eligible for vehicles be also eligible for licenses to operate those vehicles themselves.

The fact that no provision was made for replacement furthermore suggests that Congress looked on these vehicles as temporary prosthetic appliances to be furnished veterans only during their period of rehabilitation. In restricting the grant to veterans of World War II, and in then limiting the grant to a single year, Congress would appear to have underscored its intent that those vehicles be provided to aid the disabled veteran in his rehabilitation.

This emphasis on the need for travel aids to assist in the rehabilitation of veterans who have suffered leg injuries in World War II certainly would not seem to justify the grant of additional vehicles to other disabled veterans of this and previous wars. If we accept the fact that this initial grant of vehicles contributed to the sound and successful rehabilitation of World War II disabled veterans, we shall find it difficult to apply the same yardstick to these new proposals which would among other things grant automobiles to veterans who lost their arms or legs from 25 to almost 50 years ago.

It may be helpful at this point to insert in your record the report of the Veterans' Administration on the following bills: S. 54, S. 65, S. 357, S. 555, S. 606, S. 690, S. 691, S. 1022, and S. 1113. Each of these bills would provide changes in the present law.

(The report referred to follows:)

VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION,
Washington 25, D. C., May 8, 1947.

HON. ROBERT A. TAFT,

*Chairman, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare,
United States Senate, Washington 25, D. C.*

DEAR SENATOR TAFT: This is in further reply to your several requests for reports on the following bills of the Eightieth Congress:

"S. 54. A bill relating to the furnishing of automobiles to disabled veterans.

"S. 65. A bill relating to the furnishing of automobiles to disabled veterans.

"S. 357. A bill relating to the furnishing of automobiles to disabled veterans.

"S. 555. A bill to authorize the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to provide automobiles or other conveyances for certain disabled veterans of World War II.

"S. 606. A bill to authorize the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to provide automobiles or other conveyances for certain disabled veterans of World War II.

"S. 690. A bill relating to the furnishing of automobiles to disabled veterans.

"S. 691. A bill extending to June 30, 1948, the time within which certain disabled veterans may be furnished automobiles by the Veterans' Administration.

"S. 1033. A bill to authorize payment by the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs on the purchase price of automobiles or other conveyances purchased by certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

"S. 1113. A bill to authorize the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to provide automobiles or other conveyances for certain disabled veterans of World War I or World War II."

The general purposes of these bills are to provide liberalization of the present law relating to automobiles or other conveyances for certain disabled veterans. Among the varying provisions of the bills are proposals (1) to extend the benefit to cases of service-incurred visual defects and disabilities of the upper limbs; (2) to raise the amount of the Government's payment to sums exceeding \$1,600; (3) to authorize payment of a stated sum by the Government on the purchase price of vehicles costing in excess thereof; (4) to include veterans of all wars and peacetime veterans; (5) to dispense with the requirement that the veteran be

qualified to operate the vehicle; (6) to require that the veteran be furnished training in the operation of the vehicle. The existing law on this subject is contained in the First Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1947 (Public Law 663, 79th Cong.), approved August 8, 1946, which in pertinent part reads as follows:

"Automobiles and other conveyances for disabled veterans: To enable the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to provide an automobile or other conveyance, at a cost per vehicle or conveyance of not to exceed \$1,600, including equipment with such special attachments and devices as the Administrator may deem necessary, for each veteran of World War II who is entitled to compensation for the loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle under the laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, \$30,000,000: *Provided*, That no part of the money appropriated by this paragraph shall be used for the repair, maintenance, or replacement of any such automobile or other conveyance and no veteran shall be given an automobile or other conveyance under the provisions of this paragraph until it is established to the satisfaction of the Administrator that such veteran will be able to operate such automobile or other conveyance in a manner consistent with his own safety and the safety of others and will be licensed to operate such automobile or other conveyance by the State of his residence or other proper licensing authority: *Provided further*, That under such regulations as the Administrator may prescribe the furnishing of such automobile or other conveyance shall be accomplished by the Administrator paying the total purchase price to the seller from whom the veteran is purchasing under sales agreement between the seller and the veteran."

There accompanies this report a chart from which a comparison of the detailed features of the several bills may be easily ascertained.

Under date of June 19, 1946, the Veterans' Administration submitted an adverse report to the Senate Committee on Finance, Seventy-ninth Congress, on S. 2290, Seventy-ninth Congress, which was similar in some respects to certain of the bills now under consideration, particularly with respect to the inclusion of disabilities of the upper limbs and availability of the benefit to all peacetime and wartime veterans. This bill was not reported out by the committee, but the more restrictive provisions, quoted above, covering World War II veterans disabled by loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle, were enacted as a part of the First Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1947, as incorporated in that act by amendment to House Joint Resolution 390, Seventy-ninth Congress, which amendment originated in the Senate, was revised in certain particulars in the House of Representatives, and agreed to by the Senate.

S. 54 and S. 65, identical bills, would amend the present law to provide that the maximum amount of \$1,600 to be paid by the Administrator may be applied on the purchase price of a conveyance costing more than that amount. The practical effect of either of these bills, if enacted, would be that the veteran, if he so desires, could purchase a vehicle exceeding \$1,600 in price, and the Government would contribute \$1,600 for application on such purchase price. Although there are certain makes of automobiles in the low-priced field which, with attachments, sell for \$1,600 or less, there have been some instances in which veterans have experienced delay in obtaining conveyances at or under the present cost ceiling. Furthermore, it may be desirable to allow some latitude in the matter of individual preferences with respect to certain popular makes. S. 54 or S. 65 would not materially increase the cost to the Government and would, it is believed, accomplish a desirable liberalization of the present law. However, it may be noted that these bills would merely amend the present law without extending it beyond the end of the present fiscal year. Some persons who would qualify for the benefit but for the fact that they are still in Army and Navy hospitals, will not be discharged from the service until after June 30, 1947. It is accordingly suggested that consideration be given to the enactment of permanent legislation similar to the provisions of Public Law 663, revised to permit the Administrator to pay a maximum of \$1,600 on the purchase cost of a vehicle costing in excess of that amount. This would accomplish what is proposed by S. 54 and S. 65 and would also make the benefit available to persons, otherwise qualified, who will not have been discharged by June 30, 1947. No information is available as to the exact number in this group, but it is believed that relatively few would be involved and that the increased cost to the Government would be small.

S. 606 would provide in permanent form substantially what is presently contained in Public Law 663, but which is presently limited to the current fiscal year. This bill would accomplish the purpose suggested in the preceding paragraph if it is appropriately amended to authorize the payment of not to exceed \$1,600 on the purchase price of a conveyance, with necessary attachments, which is being pur-

chased by the veteran, without any limitation on the total purchase price. It is further suggested that the bill might well contain a provision limiting the time subsequent to enactment, or discharge, whichever is the later, within which the benefit may be obtained.

S. 691 would amend the present law by making the appropriation of \$30,000,000 available for obligation until June 30, 1948. It is considered preferable that any extension of the effective period of the authorization contained in the present law should be cast in the form of permanent legislation, with a reasonable limitation, as suggested above, on the time after enactment or discharge in which the benefit must be obtained. Some World War II veterans under treatment for qualifying disabilities may not be discharged from the service by June 30, 1948. As of March 31, 1947, 14,461 persons had been certified as eligible, by reason of their disabilities, to receive benefits under Public Law 663; 10,069 of these had procured conveyances and their cases had been certified for payment in the aggregate amount of \$15,984,725. If the remaining number of the 14,461 qualify as drivers and acquire vehicles at a cost of approximately \$1,600 each, the cost for the group approved to March 31, 1947, will exceed \$23,000,000. With the additional cases which will be processed by June 30, 1947, it is anticipated that very little of the appropriation will remain.

S. 555, S. 690, and S. 1033 would render certain classes of veterans with disabilities of the arms and with visual defects eligible to receive this type of benefit. The variances in these bills are detailed in the accompanying chart.

Certain general considerations should be taken into account in connection with proposals to enlarge the disabled class eligible for a conveyance at the cost of the Government. Liberal benefits in form of prosthetic appliances, hospitalization, and medical treatment are already available to veterans with service-connected disabilities of the kind in question. Veterans with service-connected blindness may receive seeing-eye dogs and mechanical electronic equipment and under Public Law 16, Seventy-eighth Congress, approved March 24, 1943, as amended, veterans are entitled to vocational rehabilitation training where needed to overcome the handicap of disability incurred in or aggravated by service on or after September 16, 1940, and prior to the termination of World War II. Greatly increased compensation rates are payable to veterans with service-connected disabilities involving the loss, or loss of use, of the extremities or of the eyes. Such rates range as high as \$318 and \$360 monthly in wartime cases and \$238.50 and \$270 in peacetime cases. The extent of these rates is realized when compared to the normal rate of \$133 a month for wartime service-connected total disability and \$103.50 a month for peacetime service-connected total disability.

While there is a natural tendency to view with favor any proposal designed to express the deep sympathy which exists for those who have suffered severe physical losses in their country's service, this problem cannot be considered apart from the welfare of veterans generally, and the reasonable obligations of the Government to veterans as a whole. Experience strongly supports the established concept that the most practicable and equitable general method of providing for the continuing needs of seriously disabled veterans is regular monthly payment of compensation. It would seem unwise to institute a policy which by logical progression, and to avoid discrimination, might ultimately demand that all seriously disabled veterans be supplied with automobiles in addition to compensation and other benefits. A sound approach to this problem requires that any proposal to extend the present law to additional selected classes of disabled veterans be carefully examined to determine whether the necessities of those to be benefited are peculiar and urgent in relation to the benefits proposed.

Limitations contained in the present law suggest that the basic purpose was to provide rehabilitative assistance to returning veterans of World War II who have sustained a material impairment of mobility by injuries to the lower limbs. The requirement of an operator's license also suggests a purpose that the conveyance be regarded as having the nature of an additional prosthetic appliance for the direct use of the veteran.

The problem of mobility is not present to a serious degree where veterans have sustained disabilities due to the loss, or loss of use, of one or both of the hands or arms. Many other veterans, not included in the present law or the proposed bills, are more gravely handicapped in their ability to move about. It is believed that there exists very little justification for concluding that veterans in this group have a distinctive claim to the kind of benefit which would be accorded by S. 555, S. 690, and S. 1033.

Veterans who have lost their eyesight are most certainly deserving of the utmost consideration. However, it is believed that the welfare of such veterans

is best served by their fullest possible development of a sense of self-reliance. Liberal provisions giving them a considerable measure of economic independence have already been made in the form of monthly compensation rates approximately twice the normal rates payable to other totally disabled veterans. Guide dogs and mechanical aids for their own operation are provided where appropriate. Many of them are given vocational training from which they develop substantial earning power. In the case of the blinded veteran, the automobile cannot be regarded as a prosthetic appliance and it is open to serious question whether his development of initiative and self-reliance would be stimulated by granting to him, in addition to the many other benefits now available, a free automobile which must be operated by another. Moreover, there would seem to be little purpose in encouraging the blinded veteran to become habituated to his own automobile as a primary means of transportation without also providing allowances for the hiring of drivers and periodic replacements of the conveyance. No such provisions are made by these bills and for sound reasons of policy that would not be desirable.

It is specially noted that the broad definition of visual defects contained in S. 1033 would include a substantial number who are awarded compensation based on a disability rating of less than 100 percent, and who can see well enough to move about with reasonable safety and rapidity. It would seem to be incongruous for the Government to provide the purchase price of automobiles in such cases.

Many other disabled veterans not included in the bills, such as those with serious heart and lung conditions, are also handicapped as to self-transportation, and unwarranted discrimination would inevitably result from the enactment of S. 555, S. 690, or S. 1033.

Certain provisions of the bills would increase the amount to be paid by the Administrator on the purchase price of a vehicle. S. 357 would amend the present law to authorize payment not to exceed \$1,600 where the veteran does not require controls to enable operation of the conveyance solely by hand, but would authorize the payment of \$1,800 where such controls are required. S. 1033 would authorize the payment by the Administrator of \$1,900 on the purchase price of a suitably equipped vehicle.

At the present time several established and desirable makes of automobiles in the low-price field may be purchased with special driving controls at or under the \$1,600 ceiling, now prescribed. While it is true that the average price of automobiles has increased since the enactment of Public Law 633, there appears to be no sound reason for adding to the Government's obligation. The experience to date under the existing law indicates that as a general rule veterans have been able to acquire conveyances at a cost not exceeding the \$1,600 limit without great delay. It is believed that low-priced vehicles will become increasingly available in all sections of the country. In this connection the recommendation heretofore made with respect to liberalizing the present law by permanent legislation so that the \$1,600 may be applied upon the purchase price of a vehicle costing in excess of the amount is repeated. This is in recognition of the fact that many veterans prefer certain popular makes of cars which are priced at more than \$1,600 and the further fact that there have been some instances in which veterans have encountered difficulty in promptly obtaining an automobile within the limit of the present cost ceiling.

S. 1033 would make the benefit available to veterans of all wars and to peacetime veterans. S. 1113 would make World War I veterans eligible along with World War II veterans for a conveyance if entitled to compensation for loss or loss of use of one or both legs at or above the ankle. Neither the present law nor any of the bills would authorize replacement of the conveyance. Hence, a basic purpose appears to be the granting of assistance to veterans in their rehabilitation problems, both economic and psychological. In the cases of veterans of wars prior to World War II these problems have already been largely met. The nature of the disability involved further suggests that the benefit is directed primarily to combat cases. Its extension to peacetime cases is not believed, therefore, to be indicated. The Congress has ordinarily given substantial preference to wartime veterans in both the matter of increased disability compensation rates and the conferment of special types of gratuities.

Some of the bills (S. 357, S. 555, and S. 1033) would dispense with the requirement that the veteran be qualified to operate the vehicle. The absence of such a requirement marks a radical departure from the theory of the present law that a conveyance should be provided by the Government for the personal operation of the veteran as something in the nature of an additional prosthetic appli-

ance. With the removal of this limitation there would cease to exist one of the primary reasons for confining the benefit to a selected disabled group. Many other severely handicapped veterans who are likewise unable to drive an automobile will no doubt feel unduly discriminated against because, not having disabilities affecting the limbs or the eyes, they would not be eligible.

S. 555 would require that the Veterans' Administration furnish training in the operation of the vehicle to veterans in need thereof. As a practical matter, it is believed that the great majority of those affected by the bill, who proposed to operate the conveyance, will have already received adequate training as drivers either in the process of their hospitalization, or by private training in their own home localities. A few who might not have received such training could acquire it at little or no expense to themselves. It is, therefore, deemed inadvisable to require the Veterans' Administration to set up throughout the country the additional procedures, with trained personnel, which would be necessary in providing such training.

ESTIMATED COST OF THE BILLS

The enactment of either S. 54 or S. 65 would not materially increase the cost to the Government of the present provisions of Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, because each of these bills would simply amend that law to authorize payment of not to exceed \$1,600 on the purchase price of a vehicle where the veteran purchases a conveyance costing in excess of that amount. The existing limit of \$1,600 on the obligation of the Government would not be raised.

The Veterans' Administration is unable to furnish a worth-while estimate of the cost of S. 357 which would amend Public Law 663, to make the \$30,000,000 appropriation available until expended, to dispense with the requirement of driver's license, and to authorize payment by the Administrator of as much as \$1,800 on the purchase price of a vehicle where the veteran requires special controls to enable him to operate it solely by hand. Data with respect to the number who would be brought in by such bill because of the absence of a requirement for driver's license is not available and information is likewise unavailable with respect to the number who might require driving controls for hand use only, such as would permit the payment of the increased sum of \$1,800 on the purchase price. It is believed, however, that the increased cost of this bill would be comparatively small.

It is estimated that approximately 6,100 veterans of World War II who are receiving service-connected benefits administered by the Veterans' Administration, not including those eligible under Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, might qualify for a vehicle under S. 555. This would represent approximately the number, on Veterans' Administration rolls, who would be brought in by virtue of having sustained the loss, or loss of use of one or both forearms at or above the wrist or permanent blindness of both eyes with visual acuity of not more than 5/200. At \$1,600 each the additional cost for this group of 6,100 would be \$9,760,000. This does not include those veterans of World War II who might qualify under the bill but who are still in Army and Navy hospitals or who are receiving benefits administered by the War and Navy Departments, as to the number of whom no data are available. The cost of training veterans to operate conveyances as provided by S. 555 cannot be estimated with any degree of accuracy.

S. 606 would enact in permanent form substantially the provisions of Public Law 663 covering the World War II group disabled by loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle. The principal item of increased cost under this bill would be that occasioned by those who would be brought in at the time of their discharge but who cannot qualify under Public Law 663 because they are still receiving treatment in Army and Navy hospitals. The Veterans' Administration has been unable to procure information on the number of persons in this category, and no estimate of the increased cost of the bill can be supplied. It may be stated that such increased cost would probably be small.

The additional cost of S. 690 would be represented by the inclusion in the present law of World War II cases involving the loss, or loss of use of one of both arms at or above the wrist. Confining the estimate to this group, without including the group already eligible by reason of leg disabilities under Public Law 663, approximately 5,300 veterans of World War II who are receiving benefits administered by the Veterans' Administration might qualify under S. 690. The cost of furnishing automobiles at \$1,600 each to this group would amount to \$8,480,000. This does not include veterans still in Army and Navy hospitals or those receiving benefits administered by the War and Navy Departments who might qualify under the bill, as to whom it has not been possible to obtain information.

S. 691 would simply extend the effective period of the \$30,000,000 appropriation contained in Public Law 663 to June 30, 1948. For reasons heretofore indicated, the Veterans' Administration is unable to estimate the number of additional persons who would be brought in by this extension, or whether there will remain any substantial portion of the existing \$30,000,000 appropriation for obligation after June 30, 1947.

The additional cost to the Government of S. 1033 would arise from the fact that this bill would make the benefit available to veterans of peacetime and wartime service and in addition to cases involving the loss, or loss of use of one or both legs at or above the ankle, it would cover the loss, or loss of use of one or both arms at or above the wrist and permanent impairment of vision of both eyes under the broad criteria specified in the bill. Closest available and assembled figures with relation to these matters cover the slightly larger group of veterans who have suffered the loss, or loss of use, of one or both hands or feet and the more restricted group who have incurred permanent blindness of both eyes of 5/200 visual acuity or less. Based upon the number of veterans receiving service-connected benefits administered by the Veterans' Administration for these last-mentioned types of disabilities, and excluding those World War II veterans now eligible under Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, it is estimated that approximately 12,900 additional cases would be involved. These include 6,100 additional veterans of World War II, 5,700 veterans of World War I, 1,000 veterans of the Regular Establishment, and 100 veterans of the Spanish-American War. If each of approximately 12,900 qualified under S. 1033 at the full amount of \$1,900 per person the cost for this group would aggregate \$24,510,000.

It is estimated that approximately 3,400 World War I veterans who incurred loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle and who are receiving service-connected benefits from the Veterans' Administration, might qualify under S. 1113, at a cost, based on \$1,600 each, of \$5,440,000.

CONCLUSIONS

For the foregoing reasons the Veterans' Administration is unable to recommend favorable consideration by your committee of S. 357, S. 555, S. 690, S. 1033, and S. 1113.

The Veterans' Administration would not object to the enactment of S. 54 or S. 65, amending the present law to authorize the Administrator to pay not to exceed \$1,600 on the purchase price of a vehicle exceeding that amount in cost. Neither does it consider S. 691, which would amend the present law to make the \$30,000,000 appropriation available for obligation until June 30, 1948, objectionable. However, as heretofore indicated, it is recommended that in lieu of either of these three bills S. 606 be amended to authorize the Administrator to pay not to exceed \$1,600 on the purchase price of a conveyance, with necessary attachments, which may cost in excess of that amount and to require that the benefit be obtained within a specified period after date of enactment or date of discharge, whichever is the later. If so amended, the Veterans' Administration would recommend S. 606 to the favorable consideration of your committee.

Advice has been received from the Bureau of the Budget that there would be no objection by that office to the submission of this report to your committee.

Sincerely yours,

OMAR N. BRADLEY,
General, United States Army, Administrator.

Comparative analysis of certain bills relating to automobiles or other conveyances for disabled veterans, pending before the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, U. S. Senate

Bill	Cost of conveyance	Veterans' services	Disabilities covered	Operation of vehicle	Repair, maintenance, or replacement, etc.	Time limitation as to obtaining benefit
Present law, Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	Total purchase price limited to \$1,600, including necessary special equipment.	World War II.	Loss or loss of use of one or both legs at or above the ankle. ¹	Veteran must be able to operate conveyance safely and be licensed to operate by proper licensing authority.	No repair, maintenance, or replacement at Government expense.	June 30, 1947. ²
S. 54 would amend present law.	Government to pay not to exceed \$1,600, but no limitation on total purchase price. Necessary special equipment included in purchase price.	do.	Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	June 30, 1947, if enacted prior to that date. ²
S. 65 would amend present law.	Government to pay not to exceed \$1,600, but no limitation on total purchase price. Necessary special equipment included in purchase price.	do.	do.	do.	do.	Do. ²
S. 357 would amend present law.	Government to pay not to exceed \$1,600, or not to exceed \$1,800 in the case of an automobile or other conveyance equipped to be operated solely by hand, but no limitation on total purchase price. Necessary special equipment included in purchase price.	do.	do.	No requirement that veteran be able to operate vehicle.	do.	No time limitation specified. \$30,000,000 appropriation to remain available until expended.
S. 555.	Total purchase price limited to \$1,600, including special equipment.	do.	Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both legs at or above the ankle; or one or both forearms at or above the wrist; or permanent blindness of both eyes with visual acuity of not more than 5/200. ¹	No requirement that veteran be able to operate vehicle. Blind veteran must be able to obtain services of qualified operator. Veterans' Administration to furnish training in operation of vehicle to veterans in need thereof.	Government shall not be liable for repair, maintenance, or replacement, or for replacement of parts caused by use of vehicle. Veteran who received conveyance under Public Law 663, 79th Cong., not eligible.	No time limitation specified.

Comparative analysis of certain bills relating to automobiles or other conveyances for disabled veterans, pending before the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, U. S. Senate

Bill	Cost of conveyance	Veterans' service	Disabilities covered	Operation of vehicle	Repair, maintenance, or replacement, etc.	Time limitation as to obtaining benefit.
S. 606.....	Total purchase price limited to \$1,600, including necessary special equipment.	World War II.	Loss or loss of use of 1 or both legs at or above the ankle. ¹	Veteran must be able to operate vehicle safely and be licensed to operate by proper licensing authority.	Government shall not be liable for repair, maintenance, or replacement, or by reason of any damage caused by the use of such automobile or conveyance. Veteran who received conveyance under Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	No time limitation specified.
S. 690 would amend present law.	Government to pay not to exceed \$1,600, but no limitation on purchase price, including necessary special equipment. Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.do.....	Loss or loss of use of 1 or both legs at or above the ankle, or of 1 or both arms at or above the wrist. ¹ Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	June 30, 1947, if enacted prior to that date. ²
S. 691 would amend present law.	Government to pay not to exceed \$1,900 on price of suitably equipped conveyance.do.....	Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both legs at or above ankle or one or both arms at or above the wrist or permanent visual defects of both eyes involving central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in better eye, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 where there is a specified contraction of the field of vision in better eye. ¹	No requirement that veteran be qualified to operate vehicle.	No Government liability as to operation, use, repair, maintenance, or replacement. Veteran who received conveyance under Public Law 663, 79th Cong. not eligible.	\$30,000,000 appropriation "to be available for obligation until June 30, 1948," ² No time limitation specified.
S. 1033.....	Government to pay not to exceed \$1,600, including necessary equipment.	All veterans....	Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both legs at or above the ankle. ¹	Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	No Government liability for repair, maintenance, or damage resulting from use. Veteran who took under Public Law 663 not eligible.	No time limit.
S. 1113.....	Total purchase price limited to \$1,600, including necessary equipment.	World War I or World War II.	Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both legs at or above the ankle. ¹	Same as Public Law 663, 79th Cong.	No Government liability for repair, maintenance, or damage resulting from use. Veteran who took under Public Law 663 not eligible.	No time limit.

¹ Must be entitled to compensation under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration.

² By decision dated Dec. 26, 1946 (B-61701), the Comptroller General held that his office would not be required to object to the use of the appropriation provided by Public Law 663, 79th Cong., where under procedure of Veterans' Administration an obligation of \$1,600 to cover purchase price of conveyance is regularly placed on record against the appropriation on or before June 30, 1947, pursuant to approval of veteran's application, even though sales agreement as to vehicle not executed until thereafter.

General BRADLEY. The changes proposed by these bills may be summarized as follows:

It is proposed to extend the grant of automobiles to veterans blinded while in service and to veterans suffering from the loss of, or loss of use of, one or both arms.

Another change would make these benefits available to the disabled veterans of all previous wars and to veterans of the peacetime service.

It is proposed that we discard the requirement that a veteran be qualified and properly licensed to operate a vehicle in order to be eligible for one.

The proposal is made that Government payment on a vehicle be increased by varying amounts. The maximum is \$1,900.

It is proposed that the Government may make partial payment to the limit fixed by law on a vehicle where the balance of its cost is to be paid by the veteran.

And the requirement is made that the disabled veteran be properly trained by the Veterans' Administration in the operation of his vehicle.

To give you my opinion on the desirability or the likely effect of each of these changes, I shall take them up, one by one.

Of the nine bills before you, three would extend the grant of automobiles to veterans suffering from the loss, or the loss of use of one or both arms. Two of these bills would likewise include blinded veterans.

No one will question the right of armless or blinded veterans to substantial Government aid. In appearing before congressional committees, I have always advocated the concentration of long-term veterans' benefits in favor of disabled veterans.

And yet as I have indicated before, we have progressed on the theory that the disabled veteran is best helped by helping him to help himself. Armless veterans are not only equipped with limbs and trained in the use of those devices, but more importantly they are taught skills and professions where the disabling effect of the loss of a limb is minimized. This program of vocational rehabilitation was established following World War I. It was afterward reestablished by Public Law 16 and has already resulted in the restoration of thousands to useful productive lives.

In addition, the armless veteran is awarded lifetime compensation to help him piece out the extra costs of living, to offset his possible loss in earnings, and to guarantee him as far as possible an adequate standard of living. The disabling effects of amputation or loss of use of limbs are recognized by the award of special payments in addition to normal compensation for the degree of disability.

For example, where the loss of two limbs is involved, compensation rates may range from \$240 to \$318 a month. This contrasts with the normal wartime rate of \$138 per month for total disability. And where there are additional complications, the awards may run as high as \$360 per month. It is perfectly true that even \$4,000 a year will not repay a man for the loss of two or more of his limbs. But it does grant him a modest standard of living and a measure of security for life.

If it is held that the grant of an automobile is vital to the successful rehabilitation of a legless veteran, who is impaired in his freedom to travel, it is difficult to see how the same contention can be applied to an armless one. Unlike the legless veteran, he has not materially

suffered from loss of his freedom of movement. If justification is given this proposed grant of automobiles to armless veterans, we might ask why equal justification could not be given the grant of any other form of extra compensation.

The position of the blinded veteran—if more tragic than that of the armless one—is nevertheless similar in many respects. Again, there is nothing the Government can do to compensate him for this terrible disability. Even more than most critically injured veterans, the blinded veteran has paid with as great a part of his life as he can possibly give.

In our effort to help him to the limit of our resources, we have sought to guide the blinded veteran toward as great a degree of self-reliance as he can attain. Under the provisions of Public Law 16, hundreds of blinded veterans have been taught skills, trades, and professions in which they actually earn a substantial part of their living.

Seeing-eye dogs and mechanical devices are provided to help them in getting about. Compensation laws for blinded veterans guarantee them a considerable measure of economic independence. In most instances they are approximately twice the normal rates payable to other totally disabled veterans.

Unlike the armless veteran, the blinded man is seriously restricted in his freedom to travel. In his case, however, a vehicle could not be considered a prosthetic appliance capable of contributing to his self-sufficiency. In fact, if such a vehicle were to prove of any real value to him, an arrangement would have to be made for providing him a driver.

The blinded veteran, more than any other disabled person, must strive constantly for a disciplined sense of self-reliance. While the grant of an automobile might add to his comfort and convenience, it is questionable whether it would help him to develop that necessary feeling of independence.

Again, I must ask if we are approaching this problem realistically when we propose to make a one-time grant of automobiles to our blinded veterans. If the blinded veteran has need for an automobile now, eventually he will need a replacement. For ownership of a vehicle will not help him directly in overcoming his handicap. I favor the adequate and equitable payment of compensation of blinded veterans, but I think we must conscientiously question the wisdom of deliberately encouraging his dependence by piecing out compensation with the grant of an automobile.

I am not for one moment suggesting that the blinded veteran is not entitled to the comfort and convenience a vehicle might grant him—certainly far more than any of us—but I must ask if we in our zeal to help him may not in fact be hurting him in the stern task of rehabilitation.

Last year I risked the prediction that legislation of this character would be followed by repeated demands for an extension of its benefits. Unless we exercise discretion in the distribution of these cars, we shall find that a more extensive award justified the demands of still other veterans with similar or related injuries.

For instance, if the grant of automobiles is extended to veterans suffering from the loss of an arm, how shall we deny vehicles to those veterans suffering from serious heart and lung conditions and whose

freedom to travel is plainly restricted? In our effort to broaden benefits of the existing law, there is the danger that we shall create inequities affecting other groups of veterans.

If we stray from the theory of making this grant on the basis of its actual value in the rehabilitation of veterans, we shall give up our only sound yardstick and risk the peril of not knowing where to call a halt.

Of the nine bills under consideration, one would extend benefits to veterans of all previous wars and the peacetime service. Another would make grants to veterans of World War I or II.

Once again, I must refer to our basic premise on rehabilitation.

If the original grant was made to aid legless veterans in achieving readjustment and if our failure to provide for the replacement of these cars can be interpreted as proof of the fact that Congress voted these automobiles for their value in rehabilitation, we shall be hard pressed to find justification for this award to veterans of World War I and the Spanish War.

Those wars are already 29 and 49 years behind us. Most of the disabled veterans of those wars have long since been readjusted both psychologically and economically. For those who have not, there is little likelihood that the award of these cars will help them now.

It is perfectly true that some of them may have been victims of the negligence of our Government in its failure to help them through rehabilitation. But it is questionable whether we should undertake to right those wrongs a quarter or even half a century later. If we can justify the award of these vehicles at this time to veterans of all previous wars, we shall certainly establish a precedent which could warrant the long-time replacement of vehicles for veterans of World War II. Again, I must hold to my views on the specific value of these cars during the periods of rehabilitation. I believe that is the only justification for their grant.

Of the nine bills considered here, three would eliminate the requirement that veterans eligible for the grant of cars also be qualified and licensed for their operation. Since the present grant is limited to veterans whose leg injuries restrict their travels and who are nevertheless qualified to operate their vehicles with the aid of special equipment, their automobiles can logically be considered to be temporary prosthetic appliances. If we dispense with the requirement that the veteran be able to operate his vehicle, we dispute our premise that cars can be justified only when they aid in rehabilitation. If this yardstick is denied me, I am left without a sound basis on which to form an opinion.

Among these nine bills, four would hold the cost of vehicles purchased to the existing figure of \$1,600. Three would likewise hold the Government's payment to \$1,600 but it would permit this payment to be made on a car of any price if the veteran pays the difference. Another bill would authorize the payment of \$1,800 on the purchase price where the vehicle is to be operated solely by hand. Still another would further increase the Government's payment to \$1,900 and remove the limit on the total purchase price.

We are told that in some parts of the country veterans are experiencing difficulty in purchasing particular models within the purchase price. This is especially true on the west coast where transportation

charges frequently boost the clutchless cars beyond the \$1,600 limit. And yet because of the greater ease in driving, these are the vehicles that disabled veterans seem to prefer.

Like everyone else, some disabled veterans have faced delays in delivery on new automobiles. Even the eagerness of many dealers to give priority to disabled veterans has not been able to keep full pace with their needs.

Despite this, however, of the 14,461 World War II veterans certified as eligible for vehicles on March 31, 1947, 10,069 had already been delivered their conveyances. You recognize, of course, that the veteran must make his own arrangements for purchase after his application for eligibility has been approved. The sale agreement is thereafter forwarded to the Veterans' Administration for payment.

I would strongly favor lifting the restriction that prevents the veteran from paying the difference on a car costing in excess of \$1,600. This will go to insure him a car of his own choice. If we can anticipate a general lowering in prices on new cars, I would recommend that we hold to the existing limit on Government payment. Vehicles in the low-priced field are now available within that limit.

There is a particular need to change the existing law on the time limitation which has been set. As the law now reads, the funds appropriated for the purchase of automobiles for disabled veterans will no longer be available for obligation after June 30, 1947. This early cut-off date is markedly unfair to veterans who, though otherwise qualified for the grant of automobiles, have not yet been released from Army and Navy hospitals, or who will not yet be released at the time this act expires. Surely it is not the intent of Congress that these persons be deprived of vehicles simply because their injuries have not permitted earlier discharge.

Senator BALL. On that point, General, even though you obligate the money before June 30, you have to have applications which would cover it; unless you have actually a bill of sale for a car in, the fund would expire, is that it?

General BRADLEY. Let me ask our finance officer.

Mr. F. W. KELSEY (Assistant Administrator for Finance, Veterans' Administration). That is the Comptroller General's ruling that if we have the application approved from the man and he obligated it on our books, even though a bill of sale or sales agreement has not been consummated between the veteran and the dealer we still may charge it under those circumstances.

Senator BALL. You could expend the money after July 1?

Mr. KELSEY. But the man could not establish eligibility until discharged from the services.

Senator BALL. He has to show that he is capable of driving one of these cars.

Mr. KELSEY. And he must be a veteran. It would not apply in the cases of men that would still be in the hospitals because they were severely wounded and were not discharged. If they are not discharged by June 30, they could not establish eligibility and would lose out under the present law.

General BRADLEY. Of the nine bills under discussion, four would altogether remove the time limitation. Three bills would retain the expiration date of June 30, 1947. One bill would make the present ap-

appropriation available until expended and another would make it available for obligation until June 30, 1948. I would recommend that some time limit be established in order that the program may be liquidated at its completion. But I would also recommend that this time limit be generous enough to permit all eligible veterans to qualify for their grants.

One of the proposed bills would have the Veterans' Administration establish a program for the training of disabled veterans in the operation of their vehicles. Experience has shown that most disabled veterans have already been trained in the operation of specially equipped vehicles at the service hospitals in which they were treated. Those who were not trained at these centers, have been adequately trained in their home localities without help from us. I am confident there are sufficient community resources to offer this help to disabled veterans. I would think it impractical and unnecessarily expensive for us to establish a Nation-wide system of training for drivers. Such procedures would only burden the administrative overhead of these proposals.

We do not anticipate that the \$30,000,000 appropriated for Public Law 663 will have been largely exhausted by the end of this fiscal year. The 10,069 veterans who had purchased automobiles by March 31, 1947, had obligated the fund for \$15,984,725. If the full 14,461 veterans who had established their eligibility by March 31 qualify for operators' licenses and purchase cars, they will have obligated the fund for approximately \$23,000,000. The additional group which may be expected to apply for vehicles between March 31 and the end of this fiscal year, will presumably consume most of the balance of this fund.

SENATOR BALL. How many more do you estimate beyond the 14,000 who have applied, may be eligible?

GENERAL BRADLEY. It will depend on how many are discharged from the hospitals.

SENATOR BALL. Does the total you refer to cover all of them?

MR. KELSEY. I might say, sir, that in March the approved applications were 666; if we have relatively the same number for April, May, and June, that would be approximately 2,000 at a cost of \$3,200,000 and leave a balance of about \$3,300,000.

SENATOR BALL. But what I was trying to get at is, how many do you have in total? Do you have the total number of amputees potentially eligible regardless of the time limit?

GENERAL BRADLEY. We do not have that figure because many of these men are still in the hospital.

If a proposal is accepted to extend the grant of automobiles to veterans of all previous wars and the peacetime service who have been blinded or have lost or lose the use of one or both arms or legs, approximately 12,900 additional veterans would become eligible for automobiles. Under the terms of S. 1033 which would fix the Government's share at \$1,900, the total additional cost might amount to approximately \$24,500,000. A precise estimate on this bill would be altered somewhat by the particular definition of disabilities, especially in visual defects, by the number of veterans drawing retirement benefits from the service departments, and by the number who might become eligible after enactment of the measure.

Enactment of S. 1113 which would extend the grant of automobiles to veterans of both World War I and World War II who lost, or

lost the use of, one or both legs at or above the ankle would add approximately 3,400 veterans of World War I. At a maximum price of \$1,600 per vehicle, the cost of this charge would amount to approximately \$5,440,000.

S. 555 would make automobiles available to World War II veterans who suffered the loss of, or loss of use of, one or both forearms at or above the wrist or were blinded. This would make approximately 6,100 additional veterans eligible for cars. At an estimated cost of \$1,600 per car, this bill would involve a total additional expenditure of approximately \$9,760,000.

S. 690 would extend the benefit to World War II veterans who lost or lost the use of one or both arms at or above the wrist. This would affect approximately 5,300 additional veterans who are on Veterans' Administration rolls. If automobiles were furnished to this group at \$1,600 each the additional expenditure would approximate \$8,500,000. However, this bill would merely amend the present law, without extending the time or increasing the appropriation, which will be insufficient to take care of all such additional groups.

No worth-while cost estimate can be submitted on the remaining bills, which would make but slight changes in the present law, and would not entail large additional expenditures.

In summarizing my position, I want to say again that we must weigh the principles as well as the specific grants of these proposals. If a vehicle is not to be employed in the actual rehabilitation of the disabled veteran, then we must assume that it is being granted him as a premium form of compensation.

Senator BALL. Would you assume that the great bulk of the eligible veterans of World War II would have applied by the end of this fiscal year so that you would have a pretty accurate picture of what your overall cost would be by then?

General BRADLEY. If we can get the figures from the services as to how many may be released at that time.

Senator BALL. Most of them would be out by now, would they not?

General BRADLEY. A percentage, yes, sir; but there are still quite a number in hospitals.

Senator BALL. I was on the appropriations conference that wrote this into the bill. You know it is an appropriations bill. I think we did it on the same basis that you have advanced, that it would be a valuable rehabilitation help. What is your opinion as to that; has it helped set these boys up?

General BRADLEY. In certain cases it undoubtedly has; I have had some of them tell me it has helped in getting jobs which involved travel.

I have talked to one who was a sort of traveling salesman and he said he was able to get his job because he had a car.

We do not have any record of how it affects them as a whole. We have not gone beyond the point of paying the bills after they come in.

Senator BALL. You have not had people to check up to see whether it has really boosted the morale, and so on and so forth?

General BRADLEY. No; we have not.

Senator BALL. What would you favor as the date for the cut-off of applications to wind this thing up? Do you think June 30, 1948, would give you enough time?

General BRADLEY. I should think you might have to go a little beyond that; I would have to check with the services. But some of

these men have had to have a series of operations to get the stump in proper shape, and whether or not they would have them all well and able to drive a car June 30, 1948, I do not know. It might go beyond that period.

Senator BALL. You cannot approve, under the present legislation, an application until the man is certified as able to drive?

General BRADLEY. That is right.

Senator BALL. Would you want to change that?

General BRADLEY. If you do, you get away from the question of rehabilitation which we assumed that Congress had in mind when they passed it.

Senator BALL. What would be wrong with leaving it open? What would be wrong with that if you keep it a single-shot deal to buy one car? After all, the Appropriations Committee could take care of it if you got new applications.

General BRADLEY. It would be hard to ask for appropriations ahead of time unless you put a limit on it because a man comes in that might have a car, an old car, and might be waiting 2 or 3 years. We think it may be some limit of 2 or 3 years that would be a good thing to put on it so you could eventually liquidate the law and the program.

Senator BALL. As I understand it, you are in favor of changing that date of termination and also of permitting the veterans to spend their own money above \$1,600 to get a car if he wants to.

General BRADLEY. That is correct.

Senator BALL. But, as I understand it, you are not in favor of raising the limit or of other changes like taking in veterans of other wars and all that, because you get away from the original idea if you do.

General BRADLEY. You get away from the original idea of rehabilitation if you go back to World War I or Spanish-American War veterans.

Senator BALL. Thank you very much, General.

Our next witness, I believe, is Mr. Anthony Taylor, national service officer trainee, Disabled American Veterans.

Mr. TAYLOR. These gentlemen are from Walter Reed and I am already a discharged disabled veteran, and I would like to make my remarks after these gentlemen have spoken.

I would like to present First Sgt. Garnett Shipley as one of the group affected by laws or proposed laws to provide automobiles for arm and leg amputees.

**STATEMENT OF FIRST SGT. GARNETT W. SHIPLEY, WALTER REED
GENERAL HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Sergeant SHIPLEY. Mr. Chairman, my name is Garnett W. Shipley. As one of the group affected by laws or proposed laws to provide automobiles for arm and leg amputees, and the blind and paraplegics, I am glad to endorse the Senate bill 1033 and to give my reasons why such bills should be passed by this Congress. Now, as far as I am concerned, personally, I am entitled to an automobile under the present laws but I am here primarily to urge the passage of legislation that would give the same benefits to arm amputees, those that have lost their eyesight and the cord injury cases.

The first ambition of this group is to get back home and become a part of the community and to fit themselves into the industrial and economic life of the community. In doing this, one of our most severe handicaps is the means of transportation. For example, it is practically impossible for me, with the loss of my right arm and left leg, to use a streetcar or bus. Upon being discharged, I plan to go back to a job with the Interwoven Stocking Co. I feel that I will be able to do the work but my chief difficulty will be transportation to and from the job or visits to the branch mills. Even with my handicap I am in a much better position to get around than the person who has lost both eyes, and I am especially anxious that the group of blind veterans be included in any new legislation.

On the question of transportation I feel that my handicap is less severe than that of the paraplegic and, with the use of the artificial appliance, I can, with little assistance, board a bus or street car whereas the paraplegic has no use of his limbs and must use a wheel chair and cannot board a bus or streetcar under any circumstances without assistance in helping him off and on the car or bus.

It may be said that the use of an automobile is not necessary for an arm amputee as the loss of an arm or arms does not interfere with his locomotion. This, however, is not true, as the arm amputee does not have proper balance that a normal person has and, in addition to that, it is pretty difficult to attempt to carry a package or a brief case, make change and hang on to a strap at the same time with the loss of one or both arms.

I also feel that the restriction in the present law, which makes it necessary that the person receiving a car must be first licensed to operate the car, should be removed.

I have in mind especially the blind and the quadriplegics. That is, the group who, as a result of cord injury, have lost the use of both the upper and lower extremities. It is, of course, impossible for such persons to qualify for operating a car. Certainly a person in this condition should not be denied the use of an automobile and the automobile can be operated by the wife or some other member of the family which would, at least, enable the man to be taken out occasionally for a little fresh air.

I would like to make a few remarks on what General Bradley said here, too. He advocated keeping the price of a car at \$1,600. Well, at the time that that bill was passed at \$1,600, there have been two price raises in the price of automobiles since.

Now the boys that have gotten out, that got out at that time and got the care for \$1,600, that was all right, but myself, I am still in the Army. And when I get out, you have got to change this law to increase, either increase the price of it or let us add to the difference between the price of the car and \$1,600 so I can get a car I can drive. The only car I can drive is the Olds Hydromatic, and I cannot get it for \$1,600 at the present time.

Senator BALL. What is the present list price, do you know?

Sergeant SHIPLEY. The last price I got was for a two-door sedan in my home town and it would run me a little better than \$1,700. That is in my home town of Martinsburg, W. Va. That is counting the transportation and the tax and everything.

Senator BALL. That is only \$100. If we removed this present provision which prevents the veteran from making up the difference, it

would not be too tough with terminal leave, and so forth, to take care of the difference.

Sergeant SHIPLEY. But the way the bill reads right now, I cannot do it.

Senator BALL. We are in general agreement that that should be changed but I think cars are going to come down pretty soon; they think they will have to as soon as they get the market somewhat built up.

In any event, we have had this at \$1,600 for a year now and a lot of boys have either paid the difference or will, or have gotten cars for less than that—taken Chevrolets or something—and I question whether it would be wise to raise the Government's contribution. I agree we should certainly make the \$1,600 available and let the veteran pay the difference if he wants a better or different car.

I think there is a lot of force in General Bradley's statement about the blind veteran.

If the car is going to be anything beyond a pleasure vehicle which the wife drives once in a while, you almost have to furnish him a driver, and I am inclined to agree with him that we are getting away from the original concept in writing this into an appropriation bill, which was the rehabilitation value to the veteran in having lost a leg or both legs and really has difficulties just getting around.

Mr. TAYLOR. I would like to add something to that. There are some veterans that are eligible to have a car because of an amputation but they may be very poor drivers and they cannot get a license. If those fellows were given a car and could show proof of being a competent driver, that car on the road would be more of a safety measure than a hazard if he did not drive the car. If that restriction was lifted, a lot of the veterans that are eligible for cars could have their drivers in their immediate families and would not have to go out and hire a driver.

Senator BALL. Of course that again raises the problem as to whether you are doing this as a rehabilitation measure which gives the veteran a feeling of independence in getting into the swing of things because he is doing this himself, getting around himself, whereas if he has to have a driver, I question whether it has rehabilitation value or simply convenience. I grant you that it might be a convenience but it is a little different concept.

Sergeant SHIPLEY. I worked for this company for 17 years and for the last 8 years I have inspected branch mills and regardless of whether I get a car from the Government or not, I need a car. I cannot expect them to furnish me a driver and I have to drive it myself, and regardless of whether the Government gives me a car or not, that is the only way I can get around because it is 160 miles twice a week, and I think I can do it. I have taken my driver's test out at Walter Reed and I think I can do it all right with the use of a hydromatic car.

Mr. TAYLOR. Sergeant Barnes, you may present your statement at this time, please.

**STATEMENT OF FIRST SGT. WILLIAM S. BARNES, WALTER REED
GENERAL HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Sergeant BARNES, Mr. Chairman, my name is William S. Barnes, Walter Reed Hospital. As a single-arm amputee, I am one of the

group that would benefit by the provisions of Senate bill 1033. Other groups not included in the present law that would be benefited by this bill are the double-arm amputees, the blind, and the cord injury cases, or quadruplegics. I have read the press reports released by General Bradley in which I am led to believe that he thinks that by providing a prosthetic appliance, such as an artificial leg or an arm, the Government is giving something out of the way and something extraordinary.

The way I see the proposition is that these only replace something we have lost. All it does is to take the place of the loss of the limb. It cannot help you very much in getting around. I have in mind especially the double-arm amputee on a bus or trolley car or any other public conveyance. Any person who has lost the use of one or both arms has quite a difficult time in traveling in any public conveyance. I feel, and have always felt, that under such conditions an automobile is not a luxury but is necessarily a part of our rehabilitation and places us in a better position when we return to civilian life to fit into the economic and industrial pictures in our community.

Pardon personal reference, but my plans when I return to my home in Mississippi, are to go into the dairy business, which will require a great deal of travel.

I feel that if General Bradley would accompany some of the amputees on their trips, such as riding on a bus or streetcar, he might understand the situation more clearly, and if he were in a similar condition and could not use his arm or arms, he might also understand more clearly our handicaps.

The law as it now stands does not provide an automobile for the person who is unable to qualify to secure a license. It seems to me a little illogical to say that a man who has been injured in such a way that a prosthetic appliance would put him in a position to operate an automobile, should be given an automobile, but one who is disabled to the extent that he cannot operate an automobile, is to be deprived of one, because he is more severely injured than the man who can qualify to operate a car.

There have been some arguments that by permitting amputees to operate automobiles, it might result in some severe accidents. Remember that the control of the operation of the automobile is governed by the laws of the State, and I think we can rely on the State authorities to not issue license if it would endanger the owner or the public in the operation of the automobile.

In this connection, I feel that it would be much better for the group of amputees to be furnished the cars with all of the safety appliances than it would be to force them to go out into the market and pick up, for example, a used automobile without these safety appliances, to be used in connection with their business or employment, of which certainly the operation would be more hazardous.

I heartily endorse the liberalization of the present laws to include the group mentioned in my opening statement, and I feel that this would make all of the groups less dependent upon other people.

With reference to those that have lost their eyes, I might add that while the amputees have a very severe handicap in using the ordinary means of transportation, they are not nearly so handicapped as the person who has lost the sight of both eyes.

Mr. TAYLOR. Our next witness, sir, is Corp. Russell Merriman.

**STATEMENT OF CORP. RUSSELL MERRIMAN, WALTER REED
GENERAL HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Corporal MERRIMAN. My name is Russell Merriman, Walter Reed Hospital.

The proposed bill now before this committee will not benefit me personally as I am entitled to an automobile under the present law. I came up here to put in a word for the arm amputees and the blind, and for other comrades that would be entitled to an automobile under the provisions of Senate bill 1033.

Rather than making any further statement, I would prefer to answer any questions on the subject.

Mr. TAYLOR. Our next witness is Sergeant Grout.

**STATEMENT OF SGT. ALBERT M. GROUT, JR., FOREST GLEN SECTION,
WALTER REED GENERAL HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Sergeant GROUT. Mr. Chairman, my name is Albert M. Grout. There is not much that I can add to the previous testimonies given here today. I feel that the law providing for the furnishing of automobiles should be extended to the group of disabled persons as provided for in Senate bill 1033.

I shall be glad to try and answer any questions that any member of the committee might care to ask.

Senator BALL. Do you think that you would agree with General Bradley's position that the principle on which the car ought to be allowed should be that it will aid in rehabilitation?

Sergeant GROUT. I firmly believe it would aid in rehabilitation of the amputee, and all groups included.

For myself, I have to have rehabilitation in some new type of job, just what, I do not know. I have talked to Veterans' Administration counselors out at the hospital and we have arrived at a definite conclusion as to what we should try, but there is nothing I can do until I am out and discharged.

Mr. TAYLOR. Our next witness is Pvt. Noah J. La Fontaine.

**STATEMENT OF PVT. NOAH J. LA FOUNTAINE, WALTER REED
GENERAL HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Private LA FOUNTAINE. Mr. Chairman, my name is Noah J. La Fontaine, Walter Reed Hospital.

There is not much that I can add to the statements made by previous witnesses. I want to recommend that the present law be amended to include the arm amputees, the blind, and the cord injury cases who cannot now qualify for operators' licenses.

Like Sergeant Shipley, I will not benefit by the extension of the law to include other groups, as I am now entitled to an automobile under the present law.

I now have an automobile and have been operating it for a period of about 5 months. I had no trouble in securing an operator's license nor have I had any trouble in operating the car during the past 5 months, nor have I had any difficulty in getting the same insurance coverage that any other operator of an automobile can get. As you

can see, I have lost both legs. I therefore operate the automobile by hand control.

I want to conclude my statement, if there are no questions, by saying that I think an automobile for all types of amputees, as well as the blind, is vital to their rehabilitation.

Senator BALL. What kind of car is it?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. It is a Ford; it has the vacuum clutch on it.

Senator BALL. It had to be equipped with hand appliances?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. I have complete equipment on the thing. It is all hand-operated. It is not as smooth as a hydromatic, that I will admit, but I got it; that is what I could afford and that is what I got.

Senator BALL. This is a personal question and you do not have to answer it if you do not want to. General Bradley was unable to give me the answer to this question. Do you think that having the car and being able to get around by yourself has helped your morale, helped you feel that you are independent, minimizing the loss of your limbs?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. Yes, sir.

Senator BALL. And it has had a real rehabilitation value?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. Right. I feel that anybody who has suffered the loss of any limbs through the war and can get a car whereby he can get around himself, is in much better shape than these fellows who do not have a car and have no way of getting around whatsoever.

Senator BALL. Do you feel when the time comes you can earn a living and replace the car yourself?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. I hope so.

Sergeant SHIPLEY. On that question, you take like this morning. We came down here. We have, fortunately, two of the boys who have cars at the hospital that they drive. If those boys did not have cars, we would have had to come down here on taxis. I do not know what it would cost in a taxi but probably \$1 anyway—\$2 for the four of us—and we came down with those boys. That is just one of the inconveniences we have. If we had to call for a taxi we would have had to wait for half an hour before we got it and Washington has more taxis than any other city in the country. In some of the towns we would probably have had to wait an hour, and we could not possibly have gotten down here on a streetcar or bus.

STATEMENT OF ANTHONY TAYLOR, NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER TRAINEE, DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, my name is Anthony Taylor, and as a result of this last war and due to enemy action near Luxembourg, I lost my left leg below my ankle. I have a partial amputation of my right foot.

I took the DAV driving course at American University, and now I am on the job training.

While I was going to American University, this bill to provide cars for amputees was passed and I received my car.

Before I had my car I was taking the bus to school, rode three buses which involved two transfers, getting on a crowded bus, standing most

of the time, carrying my books, being shoved around and pushed around, pushing everybody else, too; waiting for the bus when I was transferring, I would always look for a place to sit down because I would get more tired than walking. My walking is limited to a certain amount, too.

Before I got to the place where I got my car, I was at the end of the day, completely exhausted. I was going to school, coming home, and when I got home I would sit down in that apartment and that is the end of it. I would sit at the table, eat, go to the bathroom and to bed. That was my daily routine before I had the car.

In October I got the car and I started to have a little more energy, felt like going a few more places. School was no longer a hardship to me. Before I had the car, the only time I ever went to the movies was on Sunday afternoon or on Saturday evening. Now, I go any night of the week that I want to because I don't have to ride the crowded street cars and busses, and I am not completely exhausted physically when I come home from work.

I would like to see this bill extended, that these fellows out at Walter Reed and other military hospitals, some of these fellows are going to be there for a long time to come, yet. I make weekly visits at Walter Reed. I know of one patient in particular. He received a skin graft. It will be 18 months before he knows whether that is going to take or not. If it does not take, then he is going to have an amputation. That will take another year until he is fitted properly with an artificial limb.

If there is a time limitation put on this bill, a year or 2 years from the present expiring date, those fellows are going to be left out.

I would like to see the blind disabled get cars.

Public opinion is in favor of it and many Congressmen have asked for it. And in regard to a disabled person who has lost the use of a limb and cannot have a driver's license or cannot get one, I have in mind a veteran who is completely paralyzed due to arthritis. His wife gets him out of bed and he rides around the house in a wheel chair. I think he lost the use of both arms. He will be eligible for a car but he will not be able to get a driver's license because he cannot move far enough forward to reach the dashboard of a car. This veteran's life is limited. If he gets a car, and his wife can take him out for a drive once a week to see the countryside and visit friends, at least he is going to enjoy life while he is here.

And if blind veterans have a car, their rehabilitation will be aided in doing certain types of work. Their biggest handicap is getting to and from work. With a car, and a member of the family driving the car, that handicap is very much relieved.

That is all I have to say.

Senator BALL. Thank you very much.

Incidentally, Mr. Taylor, can I ask you if in your work with veterans have you come in contact with many veterans who have obtained cars under this program?

Mr. TAYLOR. No; I have not. Yes; I have at that, because—I forget the exact number of them—but there were several amputees in our class. Mr. Rodgers, do you remember how many there were, how many amputees in our class?

Mr. RODGERS (committee clerk). There were nine.

Mr. TAYLOR. But all got cars, and I think they were a very big morale booster for us, and they fit into our work very well. I for one will never be without a car now.

Private LA FOUNTAINE, did you get yours under this program?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. No; I got it on my own.

Senator BALL. As I understand it, under this program, you are not eligible for a car until you have been discharged?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. That is right.

Senator BALL. And you are still in the hospital?

Private LA FOUNTAINE. Yes, sir.

Senator BALL. I understand Mrs. Rogers would like to make a statement to the committee or file one.

**STATEMENT OF HON. EDITH NOURSE ROGERS, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Mrs. ROGERS. May I make a very brief statement, Senator Ball?

I would like to present to the committee a letter written to me by Edward J. Beamon, as well as a statement. Sergeant Beamon is just being discharged from Walter Reed Hospital. He is a double-hand amputee. In the statement he describes the difficulties of a double-hand amputee in a bus or streetcar. He cannot go alone in a bus or streetcar. He has a driver's license and will be able to drive a car. With him, it is very necessary for his work, and driving a car has been a very remarkable rehabilitation.

Senator BALL. Do you want to have the letter placed in the record?

Mrs. ROGERS. Yes; I would like to place it in the record.

(The letter and the statement referred to are as follows:)

ORANGE, N. J. *May 10th, 1947.*

HON. EDITH N. ROGERS,

House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MRS. ROGERS: I am sorry that I shall not be able to attend the Senate committee meeting Monday.

You see, this is the first time that I have been home for Mother's Day in 6 years. All this time I was in the Army and the Army hospitals.

But I am sending you a statement which I wrote up, showing why the amputees and the blind veterans are in need of a car. Perhaps you can have this statement introduced at the committee meeting.

I am leaving part of the top statement blank so that you can fill in the name of the Senate committee that is hearing the bill, as I do not know the name of that committee.

I hope everything goes along in good order. Regardless of the outcome, the blind and the amputee veterans give thanks to you and the members of your committee for fighting and working so hard on our behalf.

Hoping to see you within the near future, and thanking you, personally, for all you have done for me, I am,

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD J. BEAMON.

**STATEMENT TO THE VETERANS' AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE BY FORMER SGT. EDWARD BEAMON, BILATERAL
ARM AMPUTEE, RECENTLY DISCHARGED FROM THE WALTER REED HOSPITAL**

I wish to offer, before this committee, reasons why an amputee, and an arm amputee (as in my own case), and the blind are in need of a car.

Before going any further, I would like to state that an artificial leg, arm, or a seeing-eye dog only replaces partially something that an amputee or a blind veteran has lost. It cannot aid such a veteran in getting about in a public conveyance as a streetcar or bus.

General Bradley seems to think that because the amputees and the blind have been so fitted that this readily takes care of his getting to and from places.

The General also spoke of rehabilitation and implied that the individual wounded, injured, or maimed veteran is well adjusted when he is discharged from the hospital. But the fact is that the amputee, the blind, and the veterans with paraplegia still have the matter of facing the question of transportation in order to get them about as well as getting to and from their place of employment.

Perhaps they can take a streetcar or a bus, but by the time they have reached their destination they will need the assistance of a stranger to aid them getting on and off the streetcar or bus, and certainly they will need assistance in handling of their fares. The automobile is the answer to these problems, and would give at the same time to the maimed and injured veteran the feeling of independence in not having to depend always on the kindness of strangers to aid them.

Have you ever seen an arm amputee in a streetcar or on a bus? Well, they have quite a time trying to manage things. Generally, they are carrying a package under their good arm. In order to get their fares they have to juggle around the package which they are carrying, and use their good arm to get the money out of their pockets to pay their fares. While all this is going on, the streetcar is in motion, and the conductor will not wait for or wait upon the amputee.

A double arm amputee cannot use a bus unless he has some one with him. Why? Because it is very difficult to handle small change when you have only two metal hooks to take the place of your hands.

I am a double arm amputee below the elbow. I have successfully passed a driver's test and have received my license, which qualifies me to drive a special attachment car that all amputees require.

I have just recently been discharged from the Army and the Army hospital. I am hoping to go to work very shortly, but to get to my job it will be necessary for me to take a taxi back and forth. If such is the case it will take quite a nick out of my income. My income doesn't warrant me sufficient funds to pay for taxicabs every time I go anywhere.

A car which I could drive myself would enable me to get to my job. A car to an arm amputee and blind veteran is a necessity.

Mrs. ROGERS. And then I have a joint statement from Mr. Gilford S. Moss and Mr. Al Gore with respect to S. 357 relating to the furnishing of automobiles to disabled veterans.

These two men came on by plane from Chicago from the Vaughan Hospital and in their statement before the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the House they have told us that they sleep in the hospital at night and they go to and from their work and they are able of course to earn money and that brings out the point, I think, Senator Ball, that these boys will pay taxes. So we will make some money out of them. All these boys that have money will pay taxes so it will bring revenue to the Government.

I think General Bradley said the blind would not be rehabilitated if they received cars. Certainly, it seems to me it would certainly help the veterans' general rehabilitation, independence, and peace of mind, and also they would be able to work. They would become taxpayers, and I do not know whether the matter of the veterans being taxed by the Federal Government for cars came up or not. I think the Veterans' Administration is working out something along that line. They now have to pay the Federal tax.

Senator BALL. The sales tax, you mean?

Mrs. ROGERS. Yes.

Senator BALL. That would be more or less a matter of taking it out of one pocket and putting it into the other. But I think that the bookkeeping would probably get rather involved if you exempted them on that.

Mrs. ROGERS. There is another matter that I do not think has been brought up yet, and that is that these men, if they have cars, will not have nearly so much difficulty with the stumps. If they walk too long on the stump, the stump becomes sore and then they have to be hos-

pitalized. If they have cars it will be a great saving in that they will not require so much hospitalization. That will be a saving of money.

I had a letter from Sergeant Darden the other day which I will not go into detail about at this time. It is a fairly long statement, but he was a double amputee at Walter Reed and I think this conversation he had with one of the Senators was responsible for the successful effort that was made to have the provisions for purchase of the cars go into the deficiency bill, and he has a job at the Veterans' Administration.

His legs were off just at the hip and the best type of car for him was the Olds and he cannot buy an Olds with \$1,600.

The original bill that I introduced for the boys provided a car for them and without restrictions. They could have added more money into the purchase of the car if they wished.

The men have told me that it opened up a new world to them and they are much happier at work, and I felt that it was our duty to rehabilitate them so that they can work and in a measure compensate that. We cannot compensate them.

There are a couple of blind boys coming in. I believe that they are also classed in rating with those who have lost the use of, or lost, an arm or leg so that all can be considered together in the working schedules.

Senator BALL. Let us take a short recess.

(Whereupon, at 10:30 a. m., a short recess was taken.)

Senator BALL. The committee will be in order.

Mrs. ROGERS. Senator Ball, all of the veterans' organizations which have appeared before our House committee endorsed this bill. They were the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS.

Senator BALL. Yes.

(The joint statement of Gilford S. Moss and Al Gore, submitted by Mrs. Rogers, follows:)

JOINT STATEMENT OF GILFORD S. MOSS AND AL GORE, WITH RESPECT TO S. 357, RESTATING TO THE FURNISHING OF AUTOMOBILES TO DISABLED VETERANS

Mr. MOSS. The present limitation of \$1,600 for the purchase of an automobile is inadequate. This is due to the rise in general price of automobiles since the enactment of the bill in 1946. This bill further makes no provision for the variation in freight rates throughout the country. As a result, a man living in the Detroit area can purchase one class of car while a man residing on the west coast must purchase a car which costs much less; and, as a matter of fact, at the present time a man residing on the west coast can only purchase a Ford under the present price provision.

Further, the additional cost of hand control to those men who use them in the operation of an automobile creates an inequity between them and those men, specifically amputees, who are able to operate an automobile without hand control.

A proposed bill, S. 357, is desirable in that it recognizes the inequitable conditions between the ones who must purchase hand control and those who need not. The bill does not provide for the absorption of freight rates to remove the inequities which have been pointed out. It is believed that to do complete justice, a provision should be made for this. In view of the cost of automobiles at the present time, it further appears desirable that the veteran be permitted to pay anything in excess of the amount allowed by the Government. This, I believe, is adequately provided for in S. 357.

Mr. GORE. Public Law 663 was designed to advance a measure of relief to those who have such difficulty in locomotion that they are considered to be incapable of using public transportation without difficulty. In addition, the law requires that the veteran be able to drive his own automobile and be licensed by the

licensing authority in his State. These provisions deprive a class of paralyzed veterans known as quadraplegias. These are men who are paralyzed in all extremities and who obviously cannot qualify for the automobile because of the license feature. In addition to providing locomotion for the paralyzed veteran, the automobile has been recognized as having extreme therapeutic values. Thus it is desirable that the quadraplegics who have incurred a more serious disability than the paraplegic have access to an automobile, although it would have to be driven by someone else.

At present, Public Law 663 provides that all applications for automobiles must be made by June 30, 1947. S. 357 eliminates the time limit by stating that the appropriations be available until expended.

Mr. Moss. It is recognized that it will be difficult to extend this bill to cover quadraplegias. Therefore, we wish to suggest this alternative: In order that this type of patient be made more independent and a certain measure of mobility be given him, we believe that it is fair and just to provide for the purchase of electric wheel chairs for those men who would otherwise be qualified under Public Law 663. One such chair is now being tried out at the veterans' hospital in Hines, Ill. This wheel chair costs approximately \$375. One further thing which is of interest is that the total number of quadraplegias in the country is not large. Out of 295 men at the veterans' hospital at Hines, Ill., 29 are quadraplegics. This ratio holds with respect to the other 6 paraplegic centers in the country.

STATEMENT OF QUINTUS E. CAMP, ASSISTANT NATIONAL DIRECTOR FOR CLAIMS, DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is not the purpose of the Disabled American Veterans at this time to speak for or against any of the pending bills for the furnishing of automobiles to veterans who have suffered the loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle. Our mandate from the Portland convention, 1946, is that we ask the removal of the inequities and inequalities of Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress.

It is our judgment that none of the pending bills accomplish the mandate of our convention. The requirement for amputation at or above the ankle is not equitable to those veterans who suffered unilateral or bilateral Chopart's, Syme's, or other amputations below the ankle. For the benefit of the committee, we have drawings made from Stedman's Medical Dictionary, showing some of the methods of amputation of a foot. You will see by turning to the drawings that there are several amputations to be encountered where the veteran is totally disabled so far as compensation is concerned, but he cannot be furnished an automobile because of the fact that the amputation is not at or above the ankle.

Will you come forward, Mr. Taylor?

Mr. Taylor told you in his testimony that he has the amputation of the left leg and he also has a partial amputation of the right foot. (Mr. Taylor exhibited his right foot to the committee.)

Mr. CAMP. For compensation purposes he has lost the use of the foot; but for automobile purposes, Public 663, he would not be entitled, because it is not at or above the ankle. But he feels, or he tells me, that this amputation causes him much more difficulty than the clear amputation of the middle third of the other leg.

Mr. Taylor, will you tell the Senator the difficulties you have with that foot?

Mr. TAYLOR. I cannot stand anywhere near down on the front part of my foot. The shoe wears down a little bit on the outside where I carry a little too much weight at certain times. I have to have the

shoe built up. It has to be packed and pads put in. If I carry weight that will relieve the weight out at the front of the foot, even with all of the packing and adjustments on it, it gives me more trouble than the left leg with the crosspieces.

I was a patient at Walter Reed. I go out there once a week. A major saw me out there last week, and he talked to me and asked me to come in the room and undress and show him my foot—my amputations. He looked at the foot and shook his head and said: "Those damn partial amputations of feet are worse than a B-K for a Syme's amputation. They are always giving the fellows trouble." I experienced just what he said.

Mr. CAMP. The Veterans' Administration cannot, under the existing laws, grant an automobile to this class of case. It can readily be seen by a glance at the drawing that these veterans have lost the foot or have lost the use of the foot and the Veterans' Administration allows the additional monthly compensation for anatomical loss. A double Chopart's amputation has come to our attention in which the veteran is being paid \$240 per month because of loss of both feet, but under the existing law the Veterans' Administration is correct in denying entitlement to an automobile. The Syme's amputation is not particularly favored by surgeons in the United States and Canada but has been used extensively by surgeons in Great Britain. This amputation is just below the ankle joint, and although the sufferer has nothing more or less than a pad with no propulsive power, he is denied an automobile. The Veterans' Administration does not ordinarily allow a rating for the loss of use of a foot from nerve injury, but when cases are encountered such as complete paralysis of the sciatic nerve, where the foot dangles and drops and no active movement is possible of the muscles below the knee, entitlement to an automobile is denied, and the same applies to complete paralysis of the external popliteal nerve, with foot drop and slight droop of first phalanges of all toes, abduction of foot is lost, adduction weakened, and anesthesia is present over the entire dorsum of foot and toes. Loss of use of the foot is not considered for ankylosis of the knee or ankylosis of the hip except in those cases in which crutches are required because the foot does not touch the ground. It therefore appears to us that in the cases of amputations, or loss of use of, the Veterans' Administration determination of entitlement to the special monthly compensation should be the controlling factor. It would further appear that provision should be made by amendment to one of the present bills to provide that an automobile be furnished to those individuals who have complete foot drop, ankylosis of the knee or the hip in any position, or leg shortening of 3 inches or more.

Let me digress there. In ankylosis of the joint, the joint is rigid, and the veteran who has ankylosis of the knee has more difficulty in public transportation than the man who has an artificial leg and can get the foot back under him, because in ankylosis of the knee, his leg sticks out in the aisle and people trip over it and abuse him for being in the way when it is something that he cannot help. The same applies to ankylosis of the hip; and when the veteran has that he has to sit sidewise, because that particular hip will not bend or allow him to sit in a normal position.

Public 663 was designed to afford a measure of relief to those who have such difficulty in locomotion that they are considered to be incapable of using public transportation without difficulty.

We submit that the veteran who has ankylosis of a knee has more difficulty in using public transportation and causes more inconvenience to others riding the same transportation than is encountered by the veteran with an amputation above the knee, if you please, but who has a properly fitting appliance. The veteran who has ankylosis of a hip cannot sit on the seat of a trolley car, bus, or passenger coach in a natural position but must sit in a crosswise manner on the seat in order that the fixed thigh will permit him to sit at all.

The present requirement is that the veteran be able to drive his own automobile. With an amputation above the ankle of only one foot, a veteran is furnished an automobile; but we know of at least one case, and there are probably others, in which the veteran suffered a gunshot wound of the neck and has a total paralysis of both arms and both legs. He is denied an automobile because he is unable to drive it. He has been forced to purchase an automobile out of his own funds in order that his wife may take him out of the house for an airing.

It is suggested that the committee may wish to ask the Statistical Division of the Veterans' Administration to furnish the total number of such paralytics.

There has been considerable discussion before this committee as to the amount of money to be appropriated for automobiles. One bill suggests \$1,700 and another proposes \$1,900.

We take the position that it matters not whether the veteran lives within the city limits of Lansing, Mich., where the Oldsmobile is made; Detroit, where the Ford is built; or any other automobile-manufacturing center where there are no freight rates to be paid, or San Francisco, Calif., Juneau, Alaska, or Honolulu, T. H. A veteran entitled to an automobile is a veteran entitled to an automobile, and freight differentials should be absorbed by the Government. This can easily be done by setting a fixed f. o. b. price. The Government should pay delivery charges. It might be possible to deliver an automobile to a veteran in Michigan for \$1,500 or \$1,600. In that instance the Government would save money; but to the veteran who lives west of the Rocky Mountains or outside the continental limits of the United States, there would be more cost than \$1,700 or \$1,900 for the same automobile. They should all be treated exactly alike, and this can only be done by setting a f. o. b. price and the Government absorbing the delivery charges.

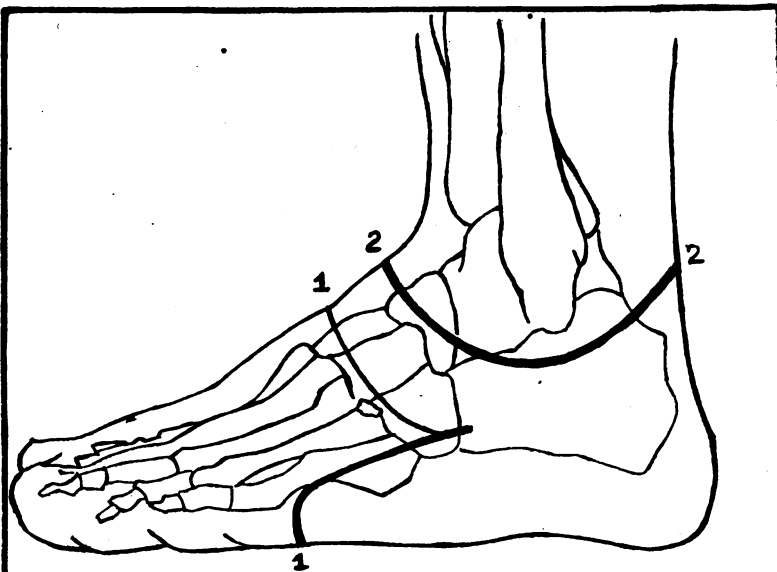
A veteran who lives in Michigan can be furnished an automobile with hydromatic drive under the existing law. The veteran who lives on the west coast cannot be furnished with an automobile any more expensive than a Ford. So far as I know, there has been only one sale of an automobile to a veteran outside the United States, and that was in Hawaii, and was a 1938 model second-hand car.

We have not had a bill introduced to cover the aims and purposes that have been set out here, but we will be happy to sit in with the subcommittee to draft a new bill or revise any of the existing bills that the committee may deem most appropriate.

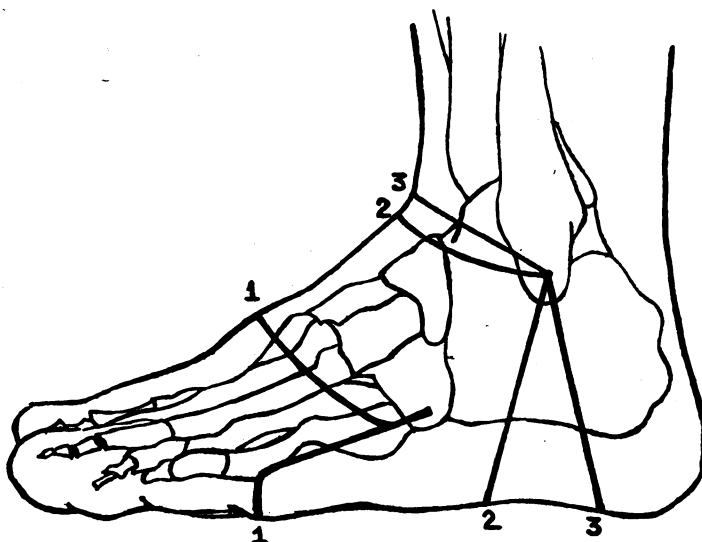
Mr. Chairman, I would like to insert the chart in the record at this point.

Senator BALL. Without objection, it will be included.

(The chart referred to follows:)



Tarsal Amputations: 1, Chopart's; 2, Mackenzie's.



Tarsal Amputation: 1-1, Lines of incision for Lisfranc's;
2-2, Pirogoff's; 3-3, Syme's amputation.

Senator BALL. I take it to be your view that any veteran who has lost the use of either leg or foot should be entitled, regardless of whether it is amputated above the ankle or not—

Mr. CAMP. That is correct. If he has lost the use of the foot, as determined by the Veterans' Administration, that should be controlling. Then, in addition, the foot-drop cases—that is, a total paralysis of the foot and ankylosis of the knee or the hip—those people are very seriously handicapped in the use of public transportation.

Senator BALL. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS KENNEDY, BALTIMORE, MD.

Senator BALL. Do you want to go ahead and tell your story to the committee?

Mr. KENNEDY. Well, sir, I want to refer back to General Bradley's statement that he made in the subcommittee about why he thought that the blind veterans should not have automobiles; and that was because of the rehabilitation purposes that naturally they could not drive themselves, and therefore it would not help them to rehabilitate in any way.

So, when a blind veteran is disabled, he immediately right away is given the thought that he cannot do anything or never will be able to do anything.

In rehabilitation, they teach him to shave himself and take care of his person, and he gets into the part of the training where they teach him a job. A blind veteran naturally cannot drive a car but so far as the job of salesman, for instance, is concerned, which a lot of blind veterans have, they certainly could use a car with a driver. I mean if they are married the wife usually works very closely with them and if they are not married, which a lot of them are not, they would have their mothers or fathers or some relative that certainly could drive them around. There would not be one in a thousand that would have to pay a chauffeur to drive an automobile, and when he comes home in the evening after pounding around downtown, getting back and forth, he gets in the house and he does not feel like having social activities at all because he feels he would have to go through the same grind for something which is known as pleasure. It takes the pleasure out of it when he has to beat his brains against the wall transporting himself around to this place for social engagements, and not only in social life in rehabilitating would it be worth while but because it would be easier for him to get around. He would have more initiative to do things he does not feel like doing now. So I think that insofar as an automobile is concerned, every blind man, whether the Senate gives it to him or not, should have an automobile. It is not a necessity; not something you cannot do without. You can do without it, you can do without a lot of things, but you might just as well take a man's right arm away from him or his cane or his dog or anything, as far as an automobile is concerned, because I certainly could use it and the only objection that I could see, from anyone I have talked to about automobiles for the blind, is because they could not drive themselves, and that is something I think that every blind veteran that you talk to certainly has someone that can drive a car for him and so on.

Senator BALL. Do you have a job, Mr. Kennedy?

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes, I do; as a matter of fact, I just left my job. I was a salesman with a stationery company—stationery and office supplies.

Senator BALL. Did you have somebody drive you around?

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes, sir; my wife.

Senator BALL. Very well; thank you, Mr. Kennedy.

Our next witness is Mr. Salkin.

STATEMENT OF MURRAY SALKIN, BALTIMORE, MD.

Mr. SALKIN. I do not know what may have been discussed and I am very sorry if we held things up. We had a little difficulty in getting over here—not in getting over here but in getting around after we were here.

My thoughts on the matter are very simple and they go to the effect that I have someone who can drive me around, my wife, my father or mother, and a few friends, but naturally it would be my wife who would be driving me around.

I mentioned Thursday that every step a blind man takes is an adventure. It is an adventure. It takes a definite and distinct effort of will to get a man out of the house to go down to the corner drugstore, and a great many of the blind men prefer not to do it.

In my case, I forced myself to do it until finally it has gotten quite a bit easier for me, but in the matter of getting around downtown, it is no pleasure for me to take a street car and go downtown and very barely know exactly what is going on, and for the purposes of my business I need a car to go out and make collections. I have a magazine business and I sell encyclopedias. Quite often the customer wants to know what he is buying first and a car would definitely be a great advantage to me.

General Bradley mentioned the other day that in his opinion the granting of cars would not be an asset to the blind. To boil his story right down, it seemed to me that if what they wanted to train us for was to put obstacles in our way, they do not have to because nature has already done enough of that.

I would be very glad to answer any type question that you gentlemen would care to put to me.

Senator BALL. Do you have a car now, Mr. Salkin?

Mr. SALKIN. Yes, sir; I went ahead and I bought one. It is nothing but a little heap, but it runs and I will have to make it do for awhile. I cannot quite afford to buy a new one.

Senator BALL. Of course, this is a one-car proposition as it is now and I think all these provisions provide. You feel once you got used to a car you would want to keep one. You figure you would be able to finance a replacement of it every 7 years?

Mr. SALKIN. Yes, sir, I do, because it would allow me a couple or 3 or 4 years to maintain a financial equilibrium.

Senator BALL. Thank you very much, Mr. Salkin and Mr. Kennedy. The subcommittee will stand in recess until 9:30 a. m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, at 11 a. m., the subcommittee adjourned until 9:30 a. m., Tuesday, May 13, 1947.)

FURNISHING AUTOMOBILES TO DISABLED VETERANS

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1947

UNITED STATES SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
OF THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE,
Washington, D. C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to adjournment, at 9:30 a. m., in the committee room, Capital Building, Senator Wayne Morse (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Morse (presiding), Jenner, and Ives.

There was present before the subcommittee Hon. Edith Nourse Rogers, a Representative in Congress from the State of Massachusetts.

Senator MORSE. The hearing will come to order.

I think we will proceed this morning to hear as our first witness Mr. H. P. Adams, executive secretary, Blinded Veterans Association, New York City. Mr. Adams.

STATEMENT OF H. P. ADAMS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK CITY

Mr. ADAMS. Mr. Chairman, we felt that the original bill, Public 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, contained an inequality as far as the blinded amputee was concerned.

Senator MORSE. In what respect?

Mr. ADAMS. In that they were left out of the bill and could not get any benefits from its provisions.

Senator MORSE. That is bill No. 663?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes.

Senator MORSE. That is the automobile bill?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes, that is the old bill.

Mrs. Rogers introduced the bill in Congress which pleased us very much.

Senator MORSE. Which incorporates the blind veterans?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes.

Mrs. ROGERS. May I interrupt just a minute? I think the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. McMahon) introduced one in the Senate. We introduced companion bills. We drafted it together in the office.

Mr. ADAMS. That was No. 555.

Senator MORSE. Is there any statement that you want to make in support of the bill other than that you are in favor of it?

Mr. ADAMS. The bill S. 555 would suit our purpose very well. It is a companion bill, as Mrs. Rogers said, to your bill in Congress.

Senator MORSE. What arguments against the bill are you aware of and what are your answers to those arguments, if you have any?

Mr. ADAMS. There are none against it that I know of, sir.

Senator MORSE. You have heard of no arguments against it?

Mr. ADAMS. No.

Senator MORSE. What about the argument as to the safety issues, as to whether or not the bill is in the interest of public safety if disabled veterans use the cars and possibly jeopardize the lives of other people?

Mr. ADAMS. Well, the bill provides for drivers for the blind.

Senator MORSE. Yes, but what about the disabilities other than blindness?

Mr. ADAMS. I believe they are qualified to drive after proper instructions.

Senator MORSE. Mrs. Rogers, have you testified on the bill?

Mrs. ROGERS. I testified a little bit yesterday, Senator. The reason I came over is that they felt that in some of the original plans that only a man who was totally blind, lost the use of his eyes or the sight of an eye would be given the car. They felt that men like Mr. Adams who has what you call pin-point vision is just as much disabled but not quite, as he can walk. Of course the blind felt that a member of the family could drive the car and of course the blind are always classed in rating with amputees. Anyone who has lost an eye or the use of an eye, or lost a limb or the use of a limb—they are classed together for rating purposes.

Mr. ADAMS. In my case I could not drive while I could travel alone.

Mrs. ROGERS. That is why they came down and the Veterans' Administration lawyers sat down with Mr. Adams and two men who were absolutely blind, in my office and we drafted something that would meet the requirements.

Senator MORSE. What I am trying to do in this record, Mr. Adams, before we adjourn our hearing, is to get in all rebuttal statements that we can get in, which answer objections to any of this pending legislation. After our hearings are closed, it will be just too late, at the pace that we keep here, to reopen the hearings for public testimony.

Hence, if any of your veterans know of arguments being used against any of this legislation, I would like to have your replies to them in the record before we close the hearings.

Briefly, what I have heard so far is: (1) The economy argument, (2) that such expenditures are going to be made for the veterans, for the disabled veterans. If they are, they ought to be made for them in some form other than automobiles because of the drain upon their resources of keeping up and operating the automobiles. The point is that a good many of them just do not have the resources for the upkeep. I am just presenting these arguments; I am not saying they are my arguments; quite the contrary is my point of view. Nevertheless, I think we ought to have the answers to the argument.

Mr. ADAMS. We have no objections to the bill, as I have stated. We are very much pleased with the bill as introduced.

Have you anything you want to say, Mrs. Rogers?

Mrs. ROGERS. Just that I think some 10,000 amputee veterans have cars and I have not heard one say he has difficulty in the upkeep of the car. Of course, it is much cheaper to own an automobile than to take taxis.

There will be from 5 to 7 millions left from money already appropriated under the Deficiency Act of last year at the end of June.

Senator MORSE. As I understand it, General Bradley has taken the position that he cannot relate the giving of cars to the blind with the basic object of rehabilitation. What do we have to say about that?

Mrs. ROGERS. It seems to me it is one of the finest kinds of rehabilitation that you could possibly have. A man with a car can go to work and move around more freely.

Mr. ADAMS. Mobility of the blind is one of the things that hinders rehabilitation. Unless they can move around and move freely—take New York City where they have to travel in subways. It is pretty much of a job to jam in subways around rush hours. There are two boys working with me, totally blind, who have to use taxis every day because they possibly could not use the subways.

Senator MORSE. Would you say that one of the main problems of rehabilitating the disabled veteran is not alone economic rehabilitation but psychological rehabilitation and that to the extent that you can provide him with a psychological lift, make it possible for him to get about in society, increase his contacts with society, that you pick him up psychologically?

Mr. ADAMS. That is right, sir. We have a good many cases in New York City that never leave their home because they just would not get in the subways and that one of our problems in rehabilitating anybody who has suffered a great handicap is to overcome psychological depression. That is the first step.

Senator MORSE. And to the extent that the use of an automobile gets them about, gets their minds off their own troubles and enables them to feel that they are taking a more active part in the affairs of men, it will have a rehabilitative value.

Mr. ADAMS. Definitely.

Mrs. ROGERS. They are perfectly healthy, too. You see, they are able to work and I think their other senses are extra-sensitive and even keener as the result of this blindness; and also they earn and pay taxes to the Government.

Senator MORSE. Any other comments?

(No response.)

Thank you, Mr. Adams.

Mr. ADAMS. I had prepared a little statement I would like to leave with the committee.

Senator MORSE. The committee will be glad to have it and it will be incorporated in the record at this point.

(The statement referred to follows:)

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION,
New York 7, N. Y., May 12, 1947.

To the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare:

GENTLEMEN: In reference to the bill which is before the committee, the Blinded Veterans Association, as representative for 1,300 Blinded veterans of World War II, begs leave to state the case for automobiles for blinded veterans.

It is obviously unnecessary to describe the desire of the blinded veteran to live a normal life, hold down a job, and travel quickly and easily between his home and his job. Nor is it necessary to state the difficulties for a blinded veteran or a blinded amputee in walking or using public and crowded conveyances.

The process of rehabilitation which will make it possible for us to contribute to the normal life of our community, is slow and not easy.

We ask for inclusion in the benefits provided to amputees in Public Law 663. With the aid of members of our families to operate vehicles safely, and transport us to our schools or our jobs, an enormous part of the difficulty inherent in our handicap would be removed. Make the business of locomotion and transporta-

pitalized. If they have cars it will be a great saving in that they will not require so much hospitalization. That will be a saving of money.

I had a letter from Sergeant Darden the other day which I will not go into detail about at this time. It is a fairly long statement, but he was a double amputee at Walter Reed and I think this conversation he had with one of the Senators was responsible for the successful effort that was made to have the provisions for purchase of the cars go into the deficiency bill, and he has a job at the Veterans' Administration.

His legs were off just at the hip and the best type of car for him was the Olds and he cannot buy an Olds with \$1,600.

The original bill that I introduced for the boys provided a car for them and without restrictions. They could have added more money into the purchase of the car if they wished.

The men have told me that it opened up a new world to them and they are much happier at work, and I felt that it was our duty to rehabilitate them so that they can work and in a measure compensate that. We cannot compensate them.

There are a couple of blind boys coming in. I believe that they are also classed in rating with those who have lost the use of, or lost, an arm or leg so that all can be considered together in the working schedules.

Senator BALL. Let us take a short recess.

(Whereupon, at 10:30 a. m., a short recess was taken.)

Senator BALL. The committee will be in order.

Mrs. ROGERS. Senator Ball, all of the veterans' organizations which have appeared before our House committee endorsed this bill. They were the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the AMVETS.

Senator BALL. Yes.

(The joint statement of Gilford S. Moss and Al Gore, submitted by Mrs. Rogers, follows:)

**JOINT STATEMENT OF GILFORD S. MOSS AND AL GORE, WITH RESPECT TO S. 357,
RESTATING TO THE FURNISHING OF AUTOMOBILES TO DISABLED VETERANS**

Mr. MOSS. The present limitation of \$1,600 for the purchase of an automobile is inadequate. This is due to the rise in general price of automobiles since the enactment of the bill in 1946. This bill further makes no provision for the variation in freight rates throughout the country. As a result, a man living in the Detroit area can purchase one class of car while a man residing on the west coast must purchase a car which costs much less; and, as a matter of fact, at the present time a man residing on the west coast can only purchase a Ford under the present price provision.

Further, the additional cost of hand control to those men who use them in the operation of an automobile creates an inequity between them and those men, specifically amputees, who are able to operate an automobile without hand control.

A proposed bill, S. 357, is desirable in that it recognizes the inequitable conditions between the ones who must purchase hand control and those who need not. The bill does not provide for the absorption of freight rates to remove the inequities which have been pointed out. It is believed that to do complete justice, a provision should be made for this. In view of the cost of automobiles at the present time, it further appears desirable that the veteran be permitted to pay anything in excess of the amount allowed by the Government. This, I believe, is adequately provided for in S. 357.

Mr. GORE. Public Law 663 was designed to advance a measure of relief to those who have such difficulty in locomotion that they are considered to be incapable of using public transportation without difficulty. In addition, the law requires that the veteran be able to drive his own automobile and be licensed by the

licensing authority in his State. These provisions deprive a class of paralyzed veterans known as quadraplegias. These are men who are paralyzed in all extremities and who obviously cannot qualify for the automobile because of the license feature. In addition to providing locomotion for the paralyzed veteran, the automobile has been recognized as having extreme therapeutic values. Thus it is desirable that the quadraplegics who have incurred a more serious disability than the paraplegic have access to an automobile, although it would have to be driven by someone else.

At present, Public Law 663 provides that all applications for automobiles must be made by June 30, 1947. S. 357 eliminates the time limit by stating that the appropriations be available until expended.

Mr. Moss. It is recognized that it will be difficult to extend this bill to cover quadraplegias. Therefore, we wish to suggest this alternative: In order that this type of patient be made more independent and a certain measure of mobility be given him, we believe that it is fair and just to provide for the purchase of electric wheel chairs for those men who would otherwise be qualified under Public Law 663. One such chair is now being tried out at the veterans' hospital in Hines, Ill. This wheel chair costs approximately \$375. One further thing which is of interest is that the total number of quadraplegias in the country is not large. Out of 295 men at the veterans' hospital at Hines, Ill., 29 are quadraplegics. This ratio holds with respect to the other 6 paraplegic centers in the country.

STATEMENT OF QUINTUS E. CAMP, ASSISTANT NATIONAL DIRECTOR FOR CLAIMS, DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is not the purpose of the Disabled American Veterans at this time to speak for or against any of the pending bills for the furnishing of automobiles to veterans who have suffered the loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle. Our mandate from the Portland convention, 1946, is that we ask the removal of the inequities and inequalities of Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress.

It is our judgment that none of the pending bills accomplish the mandate of our convention. The requirement for amputation at or above the ankle is not equitable to those veterans who suffered unilateral or bilateral Chopart's, Syme's, or other amputations below the ankle. For the benefit of the committee, we have drawings made from Stedman's Medical Dictionary, showing some of the methods of amputation of a foot. You will see by turning to the drawings that there are several amputations to be encountered where the veteran is totally disabled so far as compensation is concerned, but he cannot be furnished an automobile because of the fact that the amputation is not at or above the ankle.

Will you come forward, Mr. Taylor?

Mr. Taylor told you in his testimony that he has the amputation of the left leg and he also has a partial amputation of the right foot.

(Mr. Taylor exhibited his right foot to the committee.)

Mr. CAMP. For compensation purposes he has lost the use of the foot; but for automobile purposes, Public 663, he would not be entitled, because it is not at or above the ankle. But he feels, or he tells me, that this amputation causes him much more difficulty than the clear amputation of the middle third of the other leg.

Mr. Taylor, will you tell the Senator the difficulties you have with that foot?

Mr. TAYLOR. I cannot stand anywhere near down on the front part of my foot. The shoe wears down a little bit on the outside where I carry a little too much weight at certain times. I have to have the

shoe built up. It has to be packed and pads put in. If I carry weight that will relieve the weight out at the front of the foot, even with all of the packing and adjustments on it, it gives me more trouble than the left leg with the crosspieces.

I was a patient at Walter Reed. I go out there once a week. A major saw me out there last week, and he talked to me and asked me to come in the room and undress and show him my foot—my amputations. He looked at the foot and shook his head and said: "Those damn partial amputations of feet are worse than a B-K for a Syme's amputation. They are always giving the fellows trouble." I experienced just what he said.

Mr. CAMP. The Veterans' Administration cannot, under the existing laws, grant an automobile to this class of case. It can readily be seen by a glance at the drawing that these veterans have lost the foot or have lost the use of the foot and the Veterans' Administration allows the additional monthly compensation for anatomical loss. A double Chopart's amputation has come to our attention in which the veteran is being paid \$240 per month because of loss of both feet, but under the existing law the Veterans' Administration is correct in denying entitlement to an automobile. The Syme's amputation is not particularly favored by surgeons in the United States and Canada but has been used extensively by surgeons in Great Britain. This amputation is just below the ankle joint, and although the sufferer has nothing more or less than a pad with no propulsive power, he is denied an automobile. The Veterans' Administration does not ordinarily allow a rating for the loss of use of a foot from nerve injury, but when cases are encountered such as complete paralysis of the sciatic nerve, where the foot dangles and drops and no active movement is possible of the muscles below the knee, entitlement to an automobile is denied, and the same applies to complete paralysis of the external popliteal nerve, with foot drop and slight droop of first phalanges of all toes, abduction of foot is lost, adduction weakened, and anesthesia is present over the entire dorsum of foot and toes. Loss of use of the foot is not considered for ankylosis of the knee or ankylosis of the hip except in those cases in which crutches are required because the foot does not touch the ground. It therefore appears to us that in the cases of amputations, or loss of use of, the Veterans' Administration determination of entitlement to the special monthly compensation should be the controlling factor. It would further appear that provision should be made by amendment to one of the present bills to provide that an automobile be furnished to those individuals who have complete foot drop, ankylosis of the knee or the hip in any position, or leg shortening of 3 inches or more.

Let me digress there. In ankylosis of the joint, the joint is rigid, and the veteran who has ankylosis of the knee has more difficulty in public transportation than the man who has an artificial leg and can get the foot back under him, because in ankylosis of the knee, his leg sticks out in the aisle and people trip over it and abuse him for being in the way when it is something that he cannot help. The same applies to ankylosis of the hip; and when the veteran has that he has to sit sideways, because that particular hip will not bend or allow him to sit in a normal position.

Public 663 was designed to afford a measure of relief to those who have such difficulty in locomotion that they are considered to be incapable of using public transportation without difficulty.

We submit that the veteran who has ankylosis of a knee has more difficulty in using public transportation and causes more inconvenience to others riding the same transportation than is encountered by the veteran with an amputation above the knee, if you please, but who has a properly fitting appliance. The veteran who has ankylosis of a hip cannot sit on the seat of a trolley car, bus, or passenger coach in a natural position but must sit in a crosswise manner on the seat in order that the fixed thigh will permit him to sit at all.

The present requirement is that the veteran be able to drive his own automobile. With an amputation above the ankle of only one foot, a veteran is furnished an automobile; but we know of at least one case, and there are probably others, in which the veteran suffered a gunshot wound of the neck and has a total paralysis of both arms and both legs. He is denied an automobile because he is unable to drive it. He has been forced to purchase an automobile out of his own funds in order that his wife may take him out of the house for an airing.

It is suggested that the committee may wish to ask the Statistical Division of the Veterans' Administration to furnish the total number of such paralytics.

There has been considerable discussion before this committee as to the amount of money to be appropriated for automobiles. One bill suggests \$1,700 and another proposes \$1,900.

We take the position that it matters not whether the veteran lives within the city limits of Lansing, Mich., where the Oldsmobile is made; Detroit, where the Ford is built; or any other automobile-manufacturing center where there are no freight rates to be paid, or San Francisco, Calif., Juneau, Alaska, or Honolulu, T. H. A veteran entitled to an automobile is a veteran entitled to an automobile, and freight differentials should be absorbed by the Government. This can easily be done by setting a fixed f. o. b. price. The Government should pay delivery charges. It might be possible to deliver an automobile to a veteran in Michigan for \$1,500 or \$1,600. In that instance the Government would save money; but to the veteran who lives west of the Rocky Mountains or outside the continental limits of the United States, there would be more cost than \$1,700 or \$1,900 for the same automobile. They should all be treated exactly alike, and this can only be done by setting a f. o. b. price and the Government absorbing the delivery charges.

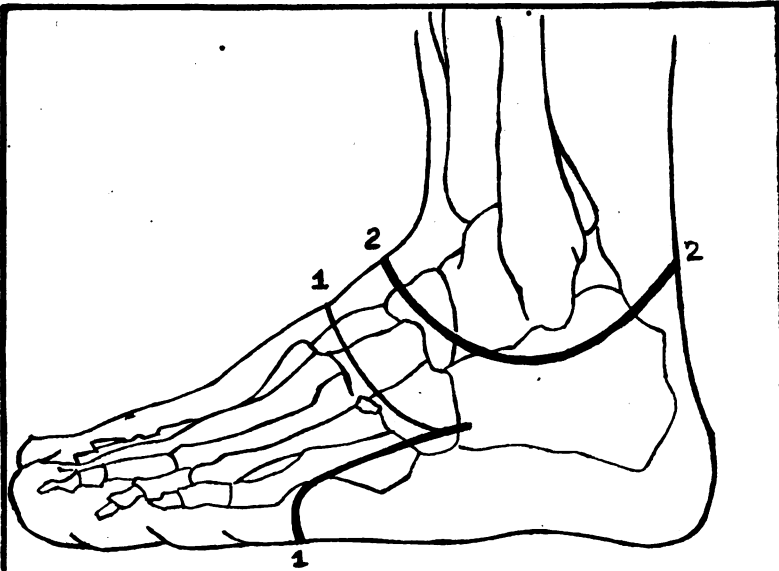
A veteran who lives in Michigan can be furnished an automobile with hydromatic drive under the existing law. The veteran who lives on the west coast cannot be furnished with an automobile any more expensive than a Ford. So far as I know, there has been only one sale of an automobile to a veteran outside the United States, and that was in Hawaii, and was a 1938 model second-hand car.

We have not had a bill introduced to cover the aims and purposes that have been set out here, but we will be happy to sit in with the subcommittee to draft a new bill or revise any of the existing bills that the committee may deem most appropriate.

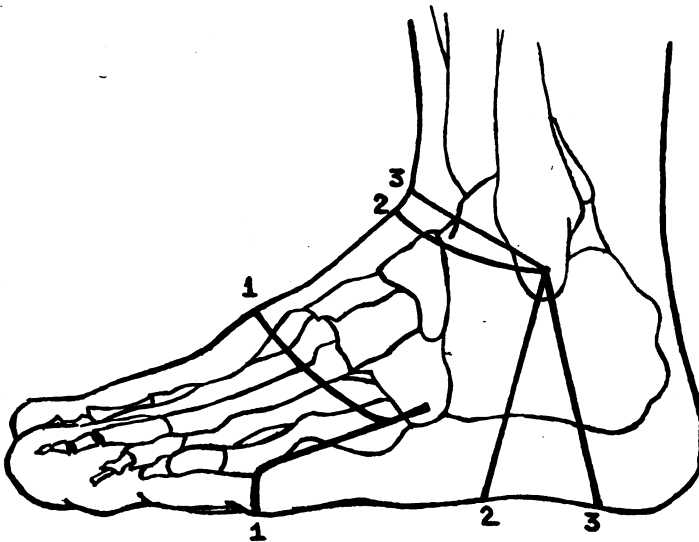
Mr. Chairman, I would like to insert the chart in the record at this point.

Senator BALL. Without objection, it will be included.

(The chart referred to follows:)



Tarsal Amputations: 1, Chopart's; 2, Mackenzie's.



Tarsal Amputation: 1-1, Lines of incision for Lisfranc's;
2-2, Pirogoff's; 3-3, Syme's amputation.

Senator BALL. I take it to be your view that any veteran who has lost the use of either leg or foot should be entitled, regardless of whether it is amputated above the ankle or not—

Mr. CAMP. That is correct. If he has lost the use of the foot, as determined by the Veterans' Administration, that should be controlling. Then, in addition, the foot-drop cases—that is, a total paralysis of the foot and ankylosis of the knee or the hip—those people are very seriously handicapped in the use of public transportation.

Senator BALL. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS KENNEDY, BALTIMORE, MD.

Senator BALL. Do you want to go ahead and tell your story to the committee?

Mr. KENNEDY. Well, sir, I want to refer back to General Bradley's statement that he made in the subcommittee about why he thought that the blind veterans should not have automobiles; and that was because of the rehabilitation purposes that naturally they could not drive themselves, and therefore it would not help them to rehabilitate in any way.

So, when a blind veteran is disabled, he immediately right away is given the thought that he cannot do anything or never will be able to do anything.

In rehabilitation, they teach him to shave himself and take care of his person, and he gets into the part of the training where they teach him a job. A blind veteran naturally cannot drive a car but so far as the job of salesman, for instance, is concerned, which a lot of blind veterans have, they certainly could use a car with a driver. I mean if they are married the wife usually works very closely with them and if they are not married, which a lot of them are not, they would have their mothers or fathers or some relative that certainly could drive them around. There would not be one in a thousand that would have to pay a chauffeur to drive an automobile, and when he comes home in the evening after pounding around downtown, getting back and forth, he gets in the house and he does not feel like having social activities at all because he feels he would have to go through the same grind for something which is known as pleasure. It takes the pleasure out of it when he has to beat his brains against the wall transporting himself around to this place for social engagements, and not only in social life in rehabilitating would it be worth while but because it would be easier for him to get around. He would have more initiative to do things he does not feel like doing now. So I think that insofar as an automobile is concerned, every blind man, whether the Senate gives it to him or not, should have an automobile. It is not a necessity; not something you cannot do without. You can do without it, you can do without a lot of things, but you might just as well take a man's right arm away from him or his cane or his dog or anything, as far as an automobile is concerned, because I certainly could use it and the only objection that I could see, from anyone I have talked to about automobiles for the blind, is because they could not drive themselves, and that is something I think that every blind veteran that you talk to certainly has someone that can drive a car for him and so on.

Senator BALL. Do you have a job, Mr. Kennedy?

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes, I do; as a matter of fact, I just left my job. I was a salesman with a stationery company—stationery and office supplies.

Senator BALL. Did you have somebody drive you around?

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes, sir; my wife.

Senator BALL. Very well; thank you, Mr. Kennedy.

Our next witness is Mr. Salkin.

STATEMENT OF MURRAY SALKIN, BALTIMORE, MD.

Mr. SALKIN. I do not know what may have been discussed and I am very sorry if we held things up. We had a little difficulty in getting over here—not in getting over here but in getting around after we were here.

My thoughts on the matter are very simple and they go to the effect that I have someone who can drive me around, my wife, my father or mother, and a few friends, but naturally it would be my wife who would be driving me around.

I mentioned Thursday that every step a blind man takes is an adventure. It is an adventure. It takes a definite and distinct effort of will to get a man out of the house to go down to the corner drugstore, and a great many of the blind men prefer not to do it.

In my case, I forced myself to do it until finally it has gotten quite a bit easier for me, but in the matter of getting around downtown, it is no pleasure for me to take a street car and go downtown and very barely know exactly what is going on, and for the purposes of my business I need a car to go out and make collections. I have a magazine business and I sell encyclopedias. Quite often the customer wants to know what he is buying first and a car would definitely be a great advantage to me.

General Bradley mentioned the other day that in his opinion the granting of cars would not be an asset to the blind. To boil his story right down, it seemed to me that if what they wanted to train us for was to put obstacles in our way, they do not have to because nature has already done enough of that.

I would be very glad to answer any type question that you gentlemen would care to put to me.

Senator BALL. Do you have a car now, Mr. Salkin?

Mr. SALKIN. Yes, sir; I went ahead and I bought one. It is nothing but a little heap, but it runs and I will have to make it do for awhile. I cannot quite afford to buy a new one.

Senator BALL. Of course, this is a one-car proposition as it is now and I think all these provisions provide. You feel once you got used to a car you would want to keep one. You figure you would be able to finance a replacement of it every 7 years?

Mr. SALKIN. Yes, sir, I do, because it would allow me a couple or 3 or 4 years to maintain a financial equilibrium.

Senator BALL. Thank you very much, Mr. Salkin and Mr. Kennedy. The subcommittee will stand in recess until 9:30 a. m. tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, at 11 a. m., the subcommittee adjourned until 9:30 a. m., Tuesday, May 13, 1947.)

FURNISHING AUTOMOBILES TO DISABLED VETERANS

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 1947

UNITED STATES SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
OF THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE,
Washington, D. C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to adjournment, at 9:30 a. m., in the committee room, Capital Building, Senator Wayne Morse (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Morse (presiding), Jenner, and Ives.

There was present before the subcommittee Hon. Edith Nourse Rogers, a Representative in Congress from the State of Massachusetts. Senator MORSE. The hearing will come to order.

I think we will proceed this morning to hear as our first witness Mr. H. P. Adams, executive secretary, Blinded Veterans Association, New York City. Mr. Adams.

STATEMENT OF H. P. ADAMS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK CITY

Mr. ADAMS. Mr. Chairman, we felt that the original bill, Public 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, contained an inequality as far as the blinded amputee was concerned.

Senator MORSE. In what respect?

Mr. ADAMS. In that they were left out of the bill and could not get any benefits from its provisions.

Senator MORSE. That is bill No. 663?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes.

Senator MORSE. That is the automobile bill?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes, that is the old bill.

Mrs. Rogers introduced the bill in Congress which pleased us very much.

Senator MORSE. Which incorporates the blind veterans?

Mr. ADAMS. Yes.

Mrs. ROGERS. May I interrupt just a minute? I think the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. McMahon) introduced one in the Senate. We introduced companion bills. We drafted it together in the office.

Mr. ADAMS. That was No. 555.

Senator MORSE. Is there any statement that you want to make in support of the bill other than that you are in favor of it?

Mr. ADAMS. The bill S. 555 would suit our purpose very well. It is a companion bill, as Mrs. Rogers said, to your bill in Congress.

Senator MORSE. What arguments against the bill are you aware of and what are your answers to those arguments, if you have any?

Mr. ADAMS. There are none against it that I know of, sir.

Senator MORSE. You have heard of no arguments against it?

Mr. ADAMS. No.

Senator MORSE. What about the argument as to the safety issues, as to whether or not the bill is in the interest of public safety if disabled veterans use the cars and possibly jeopardize the lives of other people?

Mr. ADAMS. Well, the bill provides for drivers for the blind.

Senator MORSE. Yes, but what about the disabilities other than blindness?

Mr. ADAMS. I believe they are qualified to drive after proper instructions.

Senator MORSE. Mrs. Rogers, have you testified on the bill?

Mrs. ROGERS. I testified a little bit yesterday, Senator. The reason I came over is that they felt that in some of the original plans that only a man who was totally blind, lost the use of his eyes or the sight of an eye would be given the car. They felt that men like Mr. Adams who has what you call pin-point vision is just as much disabled but not quite, as he can walk. Of course the blind felt that a member of the family could drive the car and of course the blind are always classed in rating with amputees. Anyone who has lost an eye or the use of an eye, or lost a limb or the use of a limb—they are classed together for rating purposes.

Mr. ADAMS. In my case I could not drive while I could travel alone.

Mrs. ROGERS. That is why they came down and the Veterans' Administration lawyers sat down with Mr. Adams and two men who were absolutely blind, in my office and we drafted something that would meet the requirements.

Senator MORSE. What I am trying to do in this record, Mr. Adams, before we adjourn our hearing, is to get in all rebuttal statements that we can get in, which answer objections to any of this pending legislation. After our hearings are closed, it will be just too late, at the pace that we keep here, to reopen the hearings for public testimony.

Hence, if any of your veterans know of arguments being used against any of this legislation, I would like to have your replies to them in the record before we close the hearings.

Briefly, what I have heard so far is: (1) The economy argument, (2) that such expenditures are going to be made for the veterans, for the disabled veterans. If they are, they ought to be made for them in some form other than automobiles because of the drain upon their resources of keeping up and operating the automobiles. The point is that a good many of them just do not have the resources for the upkeep. I am just presenting these arguments; I am not saying they are my arguments; quite the contrary is my point of view. Nevertheless, I think we ought to have the answers to the argument.

Mr. ADAMS. We have no objections to the bill, as I have stated. We are very much pleased with the bill as introduced.

Have you anything you want to say, Mrs. Rogers?

Mrs. ROGERS. Just that I think some 10,000 amputee veterans have cars and I have not heard one say he has difficulty in the upkeep of the car. Of course, it is much cheaper to own an automobile than to take taxis.

There will be from 5 to 7 millions left from money already appropriated under the Deficiency Act of last year at the end of June.

Senator MORSE. As I understand it, General Bradley has taken the position that he cannot relate the giving of cars to the blind with the basic object of rehabilitation. What do we have to say about that?

Mrs. ROGERS. It seems to me it is one of the finest kinds of rehabilitation that you could possibly have. A man with a car can go to work and move around more freely.

Mr. ADAMS. Mobility of the blind is one of the things that hinders rehabilitation. Unless they can move around and move freely—take New York City where they have to travel in subways. It is pretty much of a job to jam in subways around rush hours. There are two boys working with me, totally blind, who have to use taxis every day because they possibly could not use the subways.

Senator MORSE. Would you say that one of the main problems of rehabilitating the disabled veteran is not alone economic rehabilitation but psychological rehabilitation and that to the extent that you can provide him with a psychological lift, make it possible for him to get about in society, increase his contacts with society, that you pick him up psychologically?

Mr. ADAMS. That is right, sir. We have a good many cases in New York City that never leave their home because they just would not get in the subways and that one of our problems in rehabilitating anybody who has suffered a great handicap is to overcome psychological depression. That is the first step.

Senator MORSE. And to the extent that the use of an automobile gets them about, gets their minds off their own troubles and enables them to feel that they are taking a more active part in the affairs of men, it will have a rehabilitative value.

Mr. ADAMS. Definitely.

Mrs. ROGERS. They are perfectly healthy, too. You see, they are able to work and I think their other senses are extra-sensitive and even keener as the result of this blindness; and also they earn and pay taxes to the Government.

Senator MORSE. Any other comments?

(No response.)

Thank you, Mr. Adams.

Mr. ADAMS. I had prepared a little statement I would like to leave with the committee.

Senator MORSE. The committee will be glad to have it and it will be incorporated in the record at this point.

(The statement referred to follows:)

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION,
New York 7, N. Y., May 12, 1947.

To the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare:

GENTLEMEN: In reference to the bill which is before the committee, the Blinded Veterans Association, as representative for 1,300 blinded veterans of World War II, begs leave to state the case for automobiles for blinded veterans.

It is obviously unnecessary to describe the desire of the blinded veteran to live a normal life, hold down a job, and travel quickly and easily between his home and his job. Nor is it necessary to state the difficulties for a blinded veteran or a blinded amputee in walking or using public and crowded conveyances.

The process of rehabilitation which will make it possible for us to contribute to the normal life of our community, is slow and not easy.

We ask for inclusion in the benefits provided to amputees in Public Law 663. With the aid of members of our families to operate vehicles safely, and transport us to our schools or our jobs, an enormous part of the difficulty inherent in our handicap would be removed. Make the business of locomotion and transporta-

tion an automatic affair, and we will be able to devote 50 percent more of our energies to the job in hand.

Many sighted people have experienced the loss of energy which is the result of fighting crowded subways or busses to get to work. They say, "I'm tired by the time I get there." The blind person cannot afford to be tired when he gets there. In order to hold down his job he has got to be able to do it as well, if not better, than his sighted fellow worker.

We ask your special consideration for the blinded amputee. We are of the opinion that the exclusion of the blinded amputee from the benefits of Public Law 663 was unjust though perhaps not intentional.

We suggest that the section of the law stating that the veteran must operate the vehicle himself, be changed to mean that the vehicle can be operated only for the benefit of the handicapped veteran and his family.

Thank you gentleman.

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION,
H. P. ADAMS,
Executive Secretary.

Senator MORSE. The next witness is Elliott H. Newcomb, national legislative director, American Veterans of World War II.

STATEMENT OF ELLIOTT H. NEWCOMB, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICAN VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

Mr. NEWCOMB. Mr. Chairman, I am also speaking this morning on behalf of amputees of World War II. May I invite to the table with me Robert E. McLaughlin who is Judge Advocate of AMVETS?

Senator MORSE. We will be glad to have him.

Mr. NEWCOMB. Mr. Chairman, I would like permission to insert into the record of this hearing three resolutions which cover in detail this subject under discussion this morning, and then I would like to quote certain portions of those resolutions which are particularly pertinent to the bills before this committee.

Senator MORSE. Permission is granted to read the pertinent parts of the resolutions. The resolutions will be inserted in the record at this point.

(The resolutions referred to are as follows:)

RESOLUTION No. 31

Whereas Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, as it pertains to veterans who have suffered the loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs, at or above the ankle, as a direct result of war service, makes no provision for veterans who have suffered the loss, or loss of use, of one or both arms at or above the wrist as a direct result of war service, and

Whereas veterans who have suffered such arm amputations, or loss of use, are greatly and distinctly handicapped in traveling on busses, streetcars and other public conveyances, and

Whereas the need for a personal conveyance such as provided in the legislation cited above cannot be too strongly stressed; Therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Second National Convention of AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), assembled at St. Louis, November 21-24, 1946, That the Congress of the United States be requested and urged to put into effect legislation which would so amend the aforementioned law as to include veterans who have suffered the amputation of, or the loss of use of, one or both arms, as a direct result of war service.

RESOLUTION No. 32

Whereas an investigation is now in progress into the procedures and methods of the manufacturers of prosthetic appliances, because of a monopoly which is alleged to exist, and

Whereas this monopoly has resulted in the production of inferior prosthetic appliances, which are being supplied to veterans of World War II, to replace the limbs which these veterans sacrificed in the service of the United States, on the fields of battle, and

Whereas various medical magazines and the press in general have repeatedly publicized the strides and advances made in recent years relative to the manufacture of prosthetic appliances, and

Whereas it is known that such appliances have been made, which are far superior to those being supplied to the defenders of our Nation: Therefore be it

Resolved, by the Second National Convention of AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), assembled at St. Louis, November 21-24, 1946, That the agencies of the United States Government now making the investigation cited above be commended for their efforts to aid in the furnishing of the best possible prosthetic appliances for the use of our wartime disabled veterans; and be it further

Resolved, That the Congress of the United States be requested to do everything possible to implement the furtherance of experiment and scientific effort in order that the most superior prosthetic appliances may be furnished, in an effort to replace the sacrificed limbs of our World War II veterans; and be it further

Resolved, That the Veterans' Administration be authorized and directed to produce and fit, the best quality of prosthetic appliances, in accordance with the improvements which have been, or may be made, as a result of scientific experiment, regardless of the expense entailed. There should be no consideration of financial expense considered, in a question which refers to a limb lost by any veteran in the service of our Nation.

RESOLUTION No. 33

Whereas Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, provides that veterans of World War II who have suffered the loss of one or both legs at or above the ankle, or have suffered the loss of use of one or both legs, as a direct result of service in the armed forces, may purchase an automobile or other conveyance, the purchase price of which shall be paid by the Veterans' Administration; and

Whereas the aforesaid legislation stipulates that the price of such car or conveyance shall not exceed \$1,600, with the necessary appliances and taxes; and

Whereas it is further provided by regulation that the amount of \$1,600 may not be a part of a greater purchase price; and

Whereas prices of automobiles have risen an estimated 15 percent since the date of passage of the aforementioned legislation, thus making it virtually impossible for veterans to secure such vehicles as are best suited to their needs; Therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Second National Convention of AMVETS (American Veterans of World War II), assembled at St. Louis, November 21-24, 1946, That the Congress of the United States be requested to amend Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, to permit veterans who are eligible for this benefit to purchase the car of their choice, and if the price be greater than \$1,600, the veteran shall be permitted to pay the difference between the purchase price and the \$1,600 which constitutes the full liability of the Veterans' Administration, as presently provided by law; and be it further

Resolved, That inasmuch as many veterans are still hospitalized, and still being treated for conditions which make them eligible for the benefits above cited, we further petition Congress to extend the effective dates of Public Law 663 insofar as it pertains to the benefits above cited to include all eligibles, regardless of the date application is made, but not to extend beyond June 30, 1949.

Senator MORSE. You may proceed.

Mr. NEWCOMB. The first portion of the resolution I wish to quote is as follows:

Be it resolved by the Second National Convention of AMVETS, That the Congress of the United States be requested to amend Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, to permit veterans who are eligible for this benefit to purchase the car of their choice and if the price be greater than \$1,600, the veteran shall be permitted to pay the difference between the purchase price and the \$1,600 which constitutes the full liability of the Veterans' Administration as presently provided by law.

We have talked with a great many amputees and paralyzed veterans and we have become convinced that the hydromatic car is by far the best suited. It is true that it is possible by make-shift arrangements to use certain other makes of automobile but the hydromatic car which has no clutch is best suited and the price of that automobile, delivered here in Washington, is \$1,593 in stripped condition. By "stripped" I mean no spare tire, no accessories.

When you consider the amputee problem, there are many items which come to our attention. For example, the single amputee can frequently drive the hydromatic automobile as delivered at that price. But the man who has lost two legs, a double amputee, who frequently needs hand-operated accessories such as hand-operated throttle and hand-operated brake, could not buy that car under the present bill because the hand-operated brake and throttle will run the price well over the \$1,600 mark and of course we also run into the problem of freight rates. Men living in the western part of this country or in the Territories find that the price of the car is over \$1,600 and therefore are in the illogical situation of finding themselves penalized because of living in certain sections of the United States or under the United States flag.

Senator MORSE. Is it true, Mr. Newcomb, that as of the present time the veteran is not allowed to pay in excess of \$1,600?

Mr. NEWCOMB. As the bill now reads, yes, sir.

Senator MORSE. Therefore, you want it modified so that the Veterans' Administration would give him the \$1,600 and he could pay the difference?

Mr. NEWCOMB. Yes, sir.

Senator MORSE. It is my understanding that General Bradley's testimony is to the effect that if the legislation is passed, that he would be in favor of letting the veteran pay in addition to the \$1,600.

Mr. NEWCOMB. Yes.

Senator MORSE. What precaution, if any, assuming that it is desirable, is proposed to prevent the veteran from taking the \$1,600 or from getting the \$1,600 and proceeding the next day to sell the car and pocket the money?

Mr. NEWCOMB. I think those situations would be exceptions and very infrequent ones and I doubt that any law should try to incorporate those very few exceptions. I think the history of the amputee cars has already proved that the boys want them and need them. They want them because their locomotion has been limited by their wounds and they need such locomotion.

Also, the cost has risen on these automobiles about \$100 since the bill was passed and \$1,600 covered a great many more cases at the time it was made law than it now covers with the increase in cost. I am speaking of the hydromatic car.

Quoting further from another resolution:

Be it further resolved, That inasmuch as many veterans are still hospitalized and still being treated for conditions which make them eligible for the benefits above cited, we further petition Congress to extend the effective dates of Public Law 663 insofar as it pertains to the benefits above cited to include all eligibles regardless of the date application is made, but not to extend beyond June 30, 1949.

Now, there are some veterans still in the hospital who will be amputees and are not amputees today, we are advised. There are many medical conditions which cause that situation to exist. Those

men who under the present law would not be eligible to apply until the amputation is effected—we feel that they should not be penalized.

As a matter of fact, although theoretically it seems that a man who is now an amputee and is not discharged is not eligible, we are again advised by amputees, many of whom who have had the experience of trying, it is extremely difficult to have favorable action on an application, have their application accepted even while they are still in the hospitals.

In that connection, the Special Service Department of the Army says that the approaching June 30, 1947, dead line is a very serious morale factor in the amputee wards. They see the date coming and worry about it and naturally those sorts of medical things move slowly and it is a serious morale hazard to these authorities and we want to emphasize that the extension of this June 30, 1947 dead line is a must in this session of Congress.

Senator MORSE. The legislation should be amended accordingly, is your recommendation?

Mr. NEWCOMB. Yes.

To quote further, "Be it resolved——"

Senator MORSE. That is not proposed in any of these bills?

The committee clerk will draft such an amendment for the consideration of the committee, in accordance with recommendations Mr. Newcomb makes. The clerk will draft a proposed amendment that can be fitted into legislation pending on the extension date beyond June 30, 1947, if the committee should decide in favor of such an extension so we can have it for consideration of the committee in executive session.

Mr. NEWCOMB. To quote further:

Be it resolved by the second national convention of AMVETS assembled at St. Louis. That the Congress of the United States be requested and urged to put into effect legislation which would so amend the aforementioned law as to include vets who have suffered the amputation of or the loss of use of one or both arms as a result of war service.

Now of course, the popular conception of loss of arm does not usually include the trouble in locomotion but such is practically the effect because it is difficult for a man with the loss of one or both arms to travel in public conveyances. For example, if he is carrying a bundle and gets on a streetcar, it is difficult and awkward to pay the token, and if there is no sitting room, awkward again to try to hold on to something or stand up.

We feel that when you mention the subject of rehabilitation that as you pointed out to the previous witness, it is not only physical but psychological as well.

There is a saying among amputees, a very common saying, and it is not material and you cannot prove it, but it is true psychologically that, "give me a car and I am as good as anybody else," and it definitely is a psychological advantage which is definitely essential in rehabilitation programs.

We are told by the Amputees of World War II that out of 2,000 members, there are only two who are not either profitably employed or going to school and locomotion is almost always a factor in either one of those conditions. Those two are alcoholics and I think that is an amazing record, a very amazing record; and these men, with proper locomotion, are able to contribute, to become constructive, eco-

conomic people in our society. They can be salesmen, where otherwise they might have to stay in one place and do something with their hands.

Senator MORSE. But you stress the point that it is a great psychological release and relief.

Mr. NEWCOMB. Yes, definitely.

To quote further:

Be it resolved, That the Veterans' Administration be authorized and directed to produce and fit the best quality of prosthetic appliances in accordance with the improvements which have been or may be made as a result of scientific experiment regardless of the expense entailed. There should be no consideration of financial expense in a question which refers to a limb lost by any veteran in the service of our Nation.

We feel that a car can be defined as a prosthetic appliance.. We feel that it is definitely taking the place of something the man lost during the war. The AMVETS has always taken the position, which I hope they always will, to support that which will enable the veteran to help himself. We feel it is this type of legislation that is not a hand-out which would be definitely a factor in rehabilitation of the veteran. We felt that the blinded veterans should come under this legislation. We feel that very serious consideration should be given to the problems because we feel that the loss of sight also affects that same situation, both psychological and physical; and the quadruplegics are also in the same situation.

The economic factor is not one to be lightly cast aside because it does enable these men to do things like selling and going to school and making themselves better citizens for our country and more economically able to take care of themselves and that is why we favor this type of legislation that we have asked for. That will conclude my statement, sir.

Senator MORSE. Any questions?

Thank you, Mr. Newcomb.

Do you have anything that you wanted to add, Mr. McLaughlin?

Mr. McLAUGHLIN. No, sir.

Senator MORSE. Very well.

Our next witness is Mr. John C. Williamson, assistant legislative director, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Mr. WILLIAMSON.

STATEMENT OF JOHN C. WILLIAMSON, ASSISTANT LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before this committee in regard to legislation relating to the granting of automobiles for certain disabled veterans.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars supported legislation in the Seventy-ninth Congress that would authorize automobiles for disabled veterans of World War II who had suffered the loss or the loss of use of one or more legs at or above the ankle. Our support of such legislation at that time was promised on the restoration of the mobility lost by virtue of such amputation. The objectives of the legislation supported by the Veterans of Foreign Wars at that time was accomplished in

the First Supplemental Appropriation Act of 1947, which provided automobiles for such veterans when the total sales price did not exceed \$1,600.

The operation of this benefit during the past year has raised several questions, most of which are covered in the bills presently pending before the committee. I shall discuss these questions separately and present the views of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

With reference to the adequacy of the price limitation, in the fall of 1946 the national rehabilitation service began receiving numerous complaints from disabled veterans who were eligible for these automobiles, to the effect that although \$1,600 was adequate for an automobile in Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburgh, for example, the limitation was not adequate for those living in the far West or South. Unfortunately by virtue of the Veterans' Administration's interpretation of the law, which was an accurate interpretation, in our opinion, the veteran was unable to purchase an automobile where the total sales price was in excess of \$1,600, even though the veteran was ready to pay the difference out of his own pocket.

The national legislative committee, Veterans of Foreign Wars, meeting in November 1946, adopted a resolution urging the Congress to enact legislation which would permit a veteran to purchase an automobile where the total sales price was in excess of \$1,600, but that the cost to the Government would be limited by that amount. The bills S. 54 and S. 65 amend existing law in that respect, and Veterans of Foreign Wars urges your favorable consideration of the provisions of those bills in any clean bill reported to the Senate. The above also represents our opinions with respect to S. 357.

Regarding the provision for automobiles for arm amputees and blind veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is unable to endorse such an extension of these benefits because no resolution was adopted by the national encampment on that subject. As the committee knows, we are limited in our legislative activity to the resolutions adopted by the national encampment, national council of administration, and the national legislative committee. The VFW National Rehabilitation Service, as well as the national legislative service, has given considerable thought to the extension of these benefits to other disabled veterans. We feel that so long as our original support was promised on the theory of restoration of mobility we were on rational ground, because then the automobile represented or was akin to a prosthetic appliance for the veteran who suffered the loss of one or both of his lower limbs. An automobile with special attachments would enable him to move about; that is to say, restore to a certain degree his lost mobility.

In considering the extension of this benefit to other disabled veterans in our opinion the benefit then assumes the characteristic of an increase in compensation for the particular disability. To otherwise hold we would be forced to rationalize the granting of an automobile to a veteran who has lost the use of an arm as against the veteran who suffers from some other service-connected disability, chronic in nature, and equally or more disabling. There is no question in our minds that this committee as well as the Congress desires to do everything possible to alleviate in some manner the disabilities sustained by the veterans who would be covered in the bill S. 555. However, at the

same time, the Congress should not overlook the thousands of disabled veterans who are equally disabled. That is why the Veterans of Foreign Wars is of the opinion that it would be a much sounder proposition if the Congress approached this question from a compensation angle with respect to all seriously disabled veterans and not from the question of granting automobiles to a few and at the same time omitting others whose physical condition is equally or more disabling.

I again wish to reiterate that the Veterans of Foreign Wars has no official position with respect to an extension of benefits as is contemplated in S. 555, S. 690, and S. 1033, but we feel that as a major veterans organization we would be remiss in our duty to the Congress as well as all disabled veterans if we did not set forth our thinking on this matter.

As to the extension of the benefit to all service-connected leg amputees, this subject matter is covered by a resolution of our national convention. It was the opinion of the convention that there ought not to be any discrimination as between the leg amputees themselves. This is covered in the bill S. 1113, which provides an automobile to any veteran of World War I or World War II who is entitled to compensation under the laws administered by the Veterans' Administration for disability incurred in or aggravated by active military or naval service and due to the loss or permanent loss of use of one or both legs at or above the ankle.

Referring to the extension of the time for eligibility and application, the question has properly been raised as to the date beyond which the disability would result in the veteran not being eligible for an automobile. Under existing law the veteran must consummate the purchase of an automobile on or before June 30, 1947. This is so because the authority for automobiles is covered by an appropriation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1947, and not by basic law. Undoubtedly the Congress has this phase of the matter under consideration and some legislation will be enacted extending the date beyond June 30, 1947, in view of the fact that many veterans otherwise eligible have either not been discharged from service hospitals or have not readjusted themselves sufficiently to qualify for an operators permit.

The other question relates to a determination as to when a veteran must suffer the loss or loss of use of a lower limb in order to be eligible for an automobile. There are very probably many veterans who have service-connected disabilities which may ultimately lead to the loss or loss of use of a lower limb without a break in the chain of causation. For example, a veteran with osteomyelitis in a lower limb may, if the disease does not respond to treatment, ultimately suffer the loss of that limb. I have a brother who, at the age of 13, contracted osteomyelitis and today, at the age of 33, although an orthopedic surgeon, thinks he may lose his leg some day because it is chronic and when his constitutional resistance is lowered, he will just have to have it amputated.

In our opinion, therefore, the Congress ought to enact basic legislation on this subject authorizing determination by the Veterans' Administration at some future date whether or not the ultimate loss or loss of use of a leg is a proximate cause of early disability of service origin. My remarks in this respect represent our opinion with respect to the bill S. 606 and S. 691, both of which provide for an extension of the time during which the veteran may qualify for the benefits.

Senator MORSE. Thank you, Mr. Williamson, I think the statement speaks for itself.

The next witness is Mr. Chat Paterson, national legislative representative, American Veterans Committee.

Mr. Paterson.

STATEMENT OF CHAT PATERSON, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE, AMERICAN VETERANS COMMITTEE

Mr. PATERSON. Mr. Chairman, I have no prepared statement this morning. I was hoping that Mr. Bolte could come here since he himself is an amputee and has been interested in this measure ever since the beginning.

I can think of no subject that is more difficult to reason out than this whole question because you do not know just where it is going to stop. You do not know at what point the limitation or the limit is going to be reached in terms of something as broad as a bill for amputees.

In that connection, I would like to present a resolution that was passed at our first convention under our section dealing with rehabilitation, under which we stated that we support the granting of specially equipped automotive vehicles for amputees.

Since that time, in November of this past year, we passed a much larger veterans' program, one item of which stated as follows under rehabilitation: "Change the provisions of the law on cars for amputees by extending it to blinded veterans and by making the requirements of \$1,600 the limit of the contribution toward the purchase of the car rather than the maximum price."

I believe that S. 54 encompasses that. I believe that S. 56 would allow the veteran to contribute that amount over \$1,600 which he may wish to contribute, depending on the type of car he wishes to purchase.

On the question of blinded veterans, I believe that is covered by S. 555. In both cases we considered it as a rehabilitation measure. Our most recent statement on it was provided as a result of seeing some of our own members who did come under this program, and we felt that it did have a definite rehabilitation advantage, particularly to those who have lost the means of movement. It is true, under our resolution which states "outright grant for all amputees" of course it could be a finger and arm or most anything. The statement, I think, is general. I think, however, at our next convention—we have not had one in a year now—since this whole program has come up we will probably have a much more detailed discussion of it at that time.

However, we support S. 54, S. 65, S. 555, and S. 691, which would extend the time for substantially the same reasons as the representatives of the other groups have stated, that the time extension is necessary.

I am not qualified to comment on S. 1113. Apparently, that pertains to World War I veterans and we are a World War II organization.

Senator MORSE. I understand that General Bradley in his testimony stated that the time should be extended. Do you have a recommendation to make as to the date, because it is very difficult to tell when some of these cases will finally be settled so that they can go out and apply for the cars?

Mr. PATERSON. There is no way of telling. I think all you can do now is to extend it to June 30, 1948, and at this time next year see

how the situation is then. I do not think I can name a particular date because I understand some of these cases continue for many years.

However, next June 30 it may be determined that it should be closed at that point.

I would like to make very clear our own feeling, though, on this whole question, which is that what is needed is an over-all policy on the question of devices such as these.

Mr. Bolté himself initially argued against certain provisions of the original bill because he felt that it might take money away from the development of prosthetic devices, of making better arms and legs. He felt that if a bill like this became law, although he realized it would be needed for rehabilitation, he was afraid it was going to take funds away from a program, of a really adequate program of research in prosthetic devices.

I wish that somehow the committee could get over to the appropriations people for something like that, for an adequate program on the whole question of the development of prosthetic devices. We have considerable interest in that program.

Likewise, I would like to point out that although this is a partial rehabilitation move that the total rehabilitation is going to have to be in terms of jobs for everyone and general security for these people and this is only one small step and should not in any way be used as a substitute for a broad over-all program.

For that reason, we feel we should not lose sight of the total program even though these are specific small items in connection with that.

I would, in passing, like to comment that in the case of the automobiles which are manually operated there is evidently a considerable additional expense of perhaps \$100 or \$200 where it is impossible to use the lower part of your body, that I think perhaps the committee could well take into consideration, some adjustment where the automobile is completely hand-operated.

I think other than that, sir, that I have covered most of the bills that were submitted in the letter and I have nothing further to say at this point.

Senator MORSE. Any questions?

Thank you very much.

Mr. ROBERT R. POSTON (legislative representative, American Legion). Mr. Chairman, if you will permit me to introduce Charles W. Stevens, assistant national rehabilitation director, the American Legion, who will be our witness on all these bills before you.

Colonel Taylor expresses his regrets at not being here personally to introduce the gentleman.

Senator MORSE. If Colonel Taylor wants to, at a later time, file a written memorandum with the committee over and above the testimony of the witness, we will be glad to receive it.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES W. STEVENS, ASSISTANT NATIONAL REHABILITATION DIRECTOR, THE AMERICAN LEGION

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, approval on August 8, 1946, of Public Law 663, Seventy-ninth Congress, established a liberal policy on furnishing automobiles and other con-

veyances to disabled veterans of World War II entitled, under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, to compensation for the loss, or loss of use, of one or both legs at or above the ankle.

Establishment of this policy by the Congress immediately caused concern that there be an equalization of status of veterans of World Wars I and II and of those suffering impairment of upper, as well as lower, extremities. This is evidenced by the bills before this committee.

My appearance before this committee is for the purpose of stating the position of the American Legion as pertains to the pertinent bills under consideration.

It has been difficult to understand why those who suffer the loss, or loss of use, of an arm or hand were not included. Although the American Legion had no resolution or instructions for or against the provisions of the present law, many of us were called upon by numerous veterans to explain the reason for this apparent discrimination. National Rehabilitation Director T. O. Kraabel, whom I represent today, had an opportunity to consult with a group of arm amputees just as this law was being enacted, and he recalls vividly their reaction. Why, they were not bitter, but they were perplexed and uncertain as to just what would be the basis for providing cars for leg amputees and not for them. It was recognized, however, that with the one group covered by the law the element of locomotion and transportation was the main consideration.

In the use of mass transportation systems, those individuals with disabilities of the upper extremities experience difficulties similar to those with disabilities of the lower extremities. Both attain a self-confidence and a sense of freedom from handicap in the operation of their own vehicles.

The application of the provisions of this law to the cases of those entitled quite naturally generated a feeling on the part of World War I veterans who were similarly handicapped that the law should be equalized to include them. This thought found expression in one of the departments of the American Legion, was considered, approved, and referred to our national convention at San Francisco, September 30–October 4, 1946. There again the matter was gone over by the convention committee on rehabilitation, was recommended for approval, and passed by that convention. This is resolution No. 637.

This resolution establishes the position of the American Legion on this matter. It states that the American Legion favors the placing of a veteran of World War I who lost his limb or limbs in the service of his country on equal status with the veteran of World War II, insofar as it pertains to the donation or gift from our Government of an automobile.

The American Legion mandate seeks provision, through legislation, of an automobile for each veteran of World War I who is entitled, under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, to compensation for the anatomical loss or loss of use of one foot or one hand, or of both feet or both hands, or of one foot and one hand.

This goes beyond the present law. Included would be veterans with loss, or loss of use, of a foot below the ankle. Presently such veterans are entitled to the additional compensation allowance for such loss but are not among those for whom an automobile is provided. The American Legion thinks they should be.

It will be observed also that the American Legion asks extension of the law to include the upper-extremity loss cases. The resolution pertains solely to provision of automobiles for World War I veterans, as stated. However, it was understood that legislation was contemplated to amend Public Law 663 so as to include the World War II veterans with loss or use of one or both hands. Bills before you ask this.

In any event the American Legion resolution asks for equalization of status of World War I and World War II veterans as to the provision of automobiles. Speaking for the American Legion, I respectfully urge this committee's favorable consideration of equalizing this benefit for the two groups of veterans.

Mr. Chairman, the American Legion has before this committee or before the Senate no bill introduced on behalf of the organization. Mr. Hartley, of New Jersey, introduced in the House H. R. 2990, covering the American Legion's mandate and it provides solely for the World War I veteran cases. We are naturally interested, too, in the World War II veteran but did understand that before the Congress there were the bills that benefit those veterans as well.

Our convention wanted to attempt equalization of benefits for veterans disabled as a result of the two World Wars.

Now, one of the things that I think should be mentioned particularly is the varied cost of an automobile to veterans residing in different localities.

Senator MORSE. May I interrupt to say, or to ask this question, Mr. Stevens?

Do you not think the Hartley bill should be introduced on the Senate side so we could have a companion bill in the Senate to consider along with this legislation?

Mr. STEVENS. It would appear to be advisable; yes. I only represent the rehabilitation division and Colonel Taylor will take care of that with the legislative division of the Legion.

The cost varying as it does, there are veterans located in communities or cities, States near the site of production of cars that can get a better-type automobile with more appliances than can those who reside, for instance, in the deep South or on the coast.

There is a ceiling of \$1,600 in the present law, Public Law 663. The American Legion believes that the draft of the bill which will be prepared in the committee here will take this into consideration and also could take into consideration the fact that presently the determination as made by the Veterans' Administration that the Federal tax is included in the cost of the automobile. For instance, on the \$1,600 car, the Federal tax may be around 20 percent, or \$320. If the tax is forgiven through legislation, then a better automobile could be obtained for the money that is presently provided.

Senator MORSE. Do any of the proposals, any of the bills propose a tax exemption in this case?

Mr. STEVENS. None of which I know; no, sir.

Senator MORSE. I might say, Mr. Stevens, that the committee has already asked the Veterans' Administration to submit to us full data on how many veterans would qualify under the various acts before us: No. 1, blind veterans; No. 2, those that have lost an arm or both arms; and No. 3, certain types of foot amputees below the ankle which

are not now covered by the legislation and therefore do not qualify under the act.

We felt that we ought to consider the legislation covering those that will qualify under the act; also those that will not fall in the categories the chairman has just enumerated.

Mr. STEVENS. That will help; that will be helpful information. I feel the committee needs it and the Congress needs it.

There is presently a requirement that the claim for disability compensation be adjudicated before July 1, 1947, because the appropriations act which had made provision for the grant of automobiles holds that the veteran must be entitled to compensation for certain losses and unless that is shown before the July 1, 1947, dead line, the automobile may not be provided, and as was mentioned, there are a great many men still in service who are under treatment who would not be able to obtain an automobile.

There are undoubtedly men who will later lose the extremity or develop a loss of use of extremity from a service-incurred disability and it is believed that the committee will want to consider that group as well.

Senator MORSE. I think it is obvious, if we are going to consider this legislation, the date must be extended.

Mr. STEVENS. That is all I have to say.

Senator MORSE. Any questions?

Thank you very much, Mr. Stevens.

Is Eugene Cotton here?

(No response.)

Is there any other witness who wishes to testify?

(No response.)

The Chair is advised that the committee has heard all of the witnesses that desire to be heard on the bills discussed.

Mrs. ROGERS. Mr. Williams is very anxious to have this article in the Blinded Veterans Association Bulletin inserted in the record. At the top it says, "that the blinded veteran may take his rightful place in the community of his fellows and work with them toward the creation of a peaceful world."

Senator MORSE. The article in the journal referred to will be inserted in the record at this point.

(The article referred to is as follows:)

BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION SECURES DEFINITION CHANGE IN ROGERS AUTO BILL—REWRITTEN BILL IS INTRODUCED TO HOUSE

On March 18. BVA officials from national headquarters conferred with Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers, chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and author of H. R. 289, the proposed bill to furnish automobiles to certain groups of handicapped veterans including the blinded veterans. On the afternoon of March 18, the BVA met with Mr. Charles E. Calkins, administrative assistant to Senator Brien McMahon of Connecticut, who has introduced a similar bill in the Senate. John Brady, H. P. Adams and Lloyd Greenwood were received by Congresswoman Rogers in the committee room of the House of Representatives.

During the conference BVA officials pointed out that the BVA suggests a change in the definition of blindness set forth in the bill. In the auto bill, H. R. 289, introduced by Congresswoman Rogers, sums for automobiles are to be granted to those service-connected disabled veterans who in the course of such service suffered "permanent blindness of both eyes with a 5/200 visual acuity or less."

BVA representatives stated that the accepted definition of blindness for the administration of similar benefits had been 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective glasses and with a further definition of constricted field. Mr. Brady said that the BVA believes the definition of 20/200 or less set forth in General Bradley's circular No. 2 is a more appropriate definition for the purposes of the automobile bill. It was pointed out that between 20 and 35 percent of the men now considered as the war-blinded would be ineligible for automobiles if the bill were passed with its present definition.

Later in the interview which lasted over 4 hours, BVA representatives explained that the men with vision up to 20/200 suffer transportation problems which frequently prevent them from keeping good jobs. The Congresswoman agreed that if a bill were passed containing a definition conflicting with the present accepted definition of blindness held by the Veterans' Administration as well as Federal, State and private agencies, confusion might result. After the discussion, Congresswoman Rogers summoned the attorneys who had drafted the original H. R. 289 auto bill and asked that a redraft of the bill containing the BVA's suggested change in definition be submitted to her.

As a result of this meeting, Congresswoman Rogers introduced a new automobile bill, H. R. 2741, in the House of Representatives on March 24. This new bill is identical with H. R. 289, which was printed in full in the March issue of the BVA Bulletin, except for two points.

1. The definition of blindness determining eligibility has been changed from 5/200 visual acuity or less, to the following stated definition: "Permanent impairment of vision of both eyes of the following status: Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees in the better eye."

2. Instead of providing that the "total purchase price * * * not to exceed \$1,700," shall be paid to the seller by the administrator, the new bill provides that "not to exceed \$1,900" shall be paid on the purchase price.

The same change in definition was suggested to Mr. Calkins, Senator McMahon's administrative assistant, by BVA representatives on March 18. National headquarters was assured on March 26 that Senator McMahon's automobile bill, S. 555, which was identical with H. R. 289, would be redrawn and the 20/200 definition would be included in the new bill.

It is understood that since both Congresswoman Rogers' and Senator McMahon's bills are intended to accomplish the same purpose, they should be identical to avoid confusion.

The BVA has no way of telling whether or not the auto bill will be passed and become a law. However, the blinded veterans will be notified by the BVA Bulletin of all further developments concerning this enactment.

For the convenience of the blinded veterans, the new auto bill (H. R. 2741) is printed in full.

[H. R. 2741, 80th Cong., 1st sess.]

In the House of Representatives, March 24, 1947, Mrs. Rogers of Massachusetts introduce the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs:

A BILL To authorize payment by the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs on the purchase price of automobiles or other conveyances purchased by certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, subject to the conditions hereinafter set forth, the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs is authorized in the case of any veteran who is entitled to compensation under the laws administered by the Veterans' Administration by reason of disability incurred in or aggravated by active military or naval service due to one or more of the disabling conditions hereinafter specified to pay, not to exceed \$1,900, on the purchase price of a suitably equipped automobile or other conveyance which is being purchased by the veteran. Such disabilities are limited to the following:

- (a) Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both legs, at or above the ankle;
- (b) Loss or permanent loss of use of one or both arms, at or above the wrist;
- (c) Permanent impairment of vision of both eyes of the following status; central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with corrective glasses, or

central visual acuity of more than 20/200 if there is a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees in the better eye.

SEC. 2. The benefits of section 1 shall be granted under the following conditions:

(a) The Administrator shall make such payment on the purchase price to the seller from whom the veteran is purchasing under sales agreement between the seller and the veteran.

(b) The amount of the payment by the Administrator shall in no event exceed the purchase price of the automobile or other conveyance, including equipment with such special attachments and devices as the Administrator may deem necessary.

(c) Only one such payment under this Act on the purchase price of an automobile or other conveyance shall be made for the benefit of any one veteran. No veteran who has received or shall receive an automobile or other conveyance at the expense of the Government pursuant to the appropriation provisions for the Veterans' Administration contained in the First Supplemental Appropriation Act, 1947, shall be eligible for the benefits of this Act.

(d) Neither the Veterans' Administration nor any other agency of the Government shall have any liability in connection with the operation, use, repair, maintenance, or replacement of such automobile or other conveyance.

SEC. 3. The Administrator of Veterans' Affairs is authorized to issue such rules and regulations as may be appropriate to accomplish the purposes of the Act.

Senator MORSE. Mr. Cotton not having arrived, the chairman will adjourn the hearing.

(Whereupon, at 10:30 a. m., the hearing was adjourned.)

×

Y 4.L 11/2: AU 8 **C.1**
Furnishing automobiles
Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 045 487 100

DATE DUE

DATE DUE			

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004

GAYLORD

