THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT.
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THE OLD SOLDIERS GIVE THE YOUNG SOLDIERS A HAND.

In the bill now pending before the House of Representatives to provide Federal aid for the readjustment of veterans of World War II to civilian life is a provision which is the fruit of a quarter of a century of grim and often frustrated experience. Veterans of World War I know something about the heartbreak and difficulty of processing a claim for a disabled soldier and were determined when the present bill was being prepared that the veterans of this war would be spared some of those dismal experiences.

MUST BE PAID AND HIS CLAIM FILED

The provision to which this refers is that which requires that before a soldier is actually released from active service his final pay or at least a substantial part of it must be ready for delivery to him. If he is being discharged on account of a disability, he shall not be actually released from service until a claim for compensation has been filed or until he has signed a statement that his right to file such a claim has been explained to him. This simply means that if he is in good physical condition when released his final pay will be ready and if he is disabled, he will not have to wait an interminable period to get a claim filed.

OUT OF THE POST

As a general thing a soldier don't place much emphasis on records. The very nature of active military life makes him live in the present and let's the future take care of itself. Gradually there develops that longing for the day when they can be separated from service and go home. It's like the last day of school when books are flung in the air. Often, he is not too particular about the notations on his discharge and when the glad day for going home arrives, he can think only of the next train that will bear him home. Often, he is willing to forget about his hurts and disabilities for fear that if they are disclosed, it will delay him in going home. Sometimes years will elapse before his disabilities, if any, show up in aggravated form and begin to impair his efficiency in making a living. Then he turns to the question of filing a claim for his disabilities. Then also his troubles begin.

PROCESSING CLAIMS

In general under existing law, disability compensation could be obtained on two grounds. The first was if he was permanently and totally disabled from causes that had no connection with military service. But his disability had to be both total and permanent in order to get disability pension. The second ground was a disability that resulted from his military service. But it was up to him to prove. How could he prove to the satisfaction of the doctors in the Veterans Administration that he had been wounded by a shell, or gassed, or struck by a jeep or from some other cause. Obviously, he had to supply a hospital record or sworn testimony from some of his buddies or other evidence to make a case. But where was that hospital record? Had his wound or injury been noted? Where were the buddies with whom he served? Where could he find evidence? Then began the long and painful search for proof to establish that he was entitled to disability benefits. In many cases years went by and with each passing year, the difficulty of making adequate proof become harder. It will be 26 years in November 1944 since the armistice was signed. Yet thousands of cases of World War I are being processed today without success because proof is lacking. And it has been a heartbreaking experience for many a veteran who has so willingly served his country.

IT WILL BE DIFFERENT

It will be much different this time. Before he leaves the army payroll and gets his discharge, he must file or at least must sign a statement that he don't care to immediately file a claim after his rights have been fully explained. The veterans of World War I have had this grim experience. They are determined that the same mistake will not be made for this younger buddy of World War II.