

*Speech delivered on Floor of House  
Dec. 20, 1945*

Gentlemen:

I am fully conscious of the fact that all of us have a great many plans for the time we shall spend at home during the Christmas recess. I am far from being one who likes to make recommendations but I do want to make a sincere suggestion. It pertains to a problem which is of great concern to everyone of us.

Yesterday we approved legislation which is intended to take some of the kinks out of the GI Bill of Rights. It is right that we should do this because the Veterans are our major concern at the moment.

In addition to enacting legislation of this kind, however, there is a pressing problem which needs close attention. That is the disposal of surplus property in such a manner that Veterans will actually receive the preference which this Congress declared should be theirs.

I respectfully suggest, therefore, that during the recess we canvass the situation back home and see if we can't obtain sufficient facts to enable us to take care of the situation properly when Congress reconvenes.

I am particularly concerned with the items of surplus property which are now ~~lying~~ lying around in Army and Navy Camps - and which have not yet been declared surplus and turned over to RFC for disposal. There have been a few ugly rumors about the handling of this property. In some instances we have heard reports that some property has been wilfully damaged so that its destruction could be ordered. In some of these cases the property reportedly destroyed could be put to excellent use by discharged veterans.



It is my intention, while I am in Rhode Island, to visit the military establishments in my District in order to obtain a first hand report on the situation. I urge you to do likewise, insofar as that is possible.

I am grateful for the hard work which has been done by Mr. Symington of the Surplus Property office here in Washington. The plan which he has but recently announced demonstrates that he is familiar with the problem and is trying hard to bring about an equitable distribution of all surplus property to Veterans who desire to ~~obtain~~ avail themselves of their preference in surplus sales.

I desire to express my wholehearted approval of Mr. Symington's recommendation that a veteran be given the right to buy government surplus property for his own personal use and that ~~he~~ the veteran have priority over all claimants except the Federal government.

~~Such~~ If that recommendation were adopted most of our present difficulties in this matter would be eliminated.

The Honorable Lyndon Johnson has introduced legislation which would make this recommendation effective. I sincerely suggest that we make this ~~legislation~~ bill "MUST" legislation early in the next session of this congress.

I wish to make one other ~~recommendation~~ suggestion for your consideration. During the discussion on amending the GI Bill of Rights a great deal was said about a possible Bonus for the veterans of World War II. ~~There~~ ~~is~~ ~~some~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~proposals~~ Members of the House have actually introduced legislation to provide payment of a bonus to these veterans. I don't believe any of us would voice objection to such a bonus. We would feel compelled to support such a proposal either through genuine desire to



acknowledge appreciation for the valiant services of America's heroes - or through fear of the political consequences of our failure to do so.

Whatever be our individual thoughts on the matter of bonuses for veterans we have to bear in mind that the bill must be paid in some manner. With the great numbers in our Armed Forces through the late war we know the bill will be a gigantic one.

I propose therefore, that in considering a bonus we endeavor as far as we possible can to <sup>find</sup> ~~consider~~ means for paying the bonus out of funds other than the General Treasury.

With this thought in mind I intend to propose, after Congress reconvenes, that we enact legislation which will provide a decent bonus for all ~~xxx~~ honorably discharged service-men. I shall propose that the amount of the bonus in each case shall be determined by the length of ~~xxxx~~ time in the service, special consideration to be given to the time actually spent overseas. I think this latter stipulation is only fair and proper. There are many high point men still in Europe awaiting transportation to the States. These men cannot be home this Christmas. In any bonus plan, they should receive special consideration.

I shall further propose that the ~~amount of xxxxxx~~ money to be appropriated for the payment of these bonuses shall be raised through a National Lottery, based on the formula proposed in the Legislation sponsored by the Honorable Mr. Bloom.

Gentlemen, I am most sincere in making this suggestion to you. During the short recess we shall enjoy it will be possible for most of us to obtain the reaction of our constituencies to such a proposal. I believe the plan is eminently fair. I believe it could be enacted without too much delay. We could thus clear the deck of the bonus problem without forcing the Veterans of World War II to undergo the delay which their fathers experienced.