

SINCE the inception of the 88th Congress in January, 1963, more than 12,000 bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives and in excess of 3,000 in the Senate. Resolutions, Concurrent Resolutions and Joint Resolutions account for several hundred additional proposals.

While only a relatively small percentage of the total number of bills introduced ever become law, this is nonetheless a legislative load of some magnitude. For instance, at this writing 415 Public Laws have been enacted and approved, along with 277 Private Laws.

The legislative process is rarely smooth or speedy. Each bill must first be referred to a Committee having jurisdiction of its subject matter, hearings scheduled, witnesses heard, and finally gain the acceptance of a majority of the Committee before it can be reported to and acted upon by the parent body—Senate or House.

Of the more than 15,000 bills introduced during the past two years, the National Guard had interest in varying degrees in some 20 or 30.

Perhaps a better understanding of the system might be gained if I were to recite briefly the case history of one bill—H.R. 2512—which is of particular interest to the Guard.

The purpose of this bill is to clarify the status of members of the National Guard performing "additional training or duty with or without pay" authorized by the Secretary of the Army or of the Air Force, or instructing at National Guard schools or attending such a school where all of the instructors are members of the National Guard not in Federal service. Its enactment would remove any doubt as to whether individuals who become injured or contract a disease while performing such authorized training are entitled to medical care, compensation, and other benefits provided by Sections 318-320 of Title 32, United States Code.

This bill was first introduced into the 85th Congress as H.R. 12305, more than five years ago. At that time it was referred to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives which, under its procedural rules, requested Department of Defense comment. No comment was received during the 85th Congress.

In January, 1959, the bill was reintroduced, as H.R. 3356 in the 86th Congress. This time, the Department of Defense submitted a favorable report on it to the House Armed Services Committee, but the bill died for lack of action by that Committee.

In February, 1961, the bill again was introduced into the 87th Congress, as H.R. 4792. Once more, the Department of Defense gave a favorable report. A Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee scheduled hearings, heard witnesses, and recommended the bill to the full Committee, which approved it. The House passed it on 7 August, 1961.

Action then shifted to the Senate, and every effort was made to have its Committee on Armed Services schedule a hearing, but the Committee did not act. As a result, H.R. 4792 again expired upon the adjournment of the 87th Congress.

The proposal once more was introduced into the 88th Congress as H.R. 2512, and passed the House, after due report by the Department of Defense and action by the appropriate Subcommittee and later the full House Armed Services Committee.

At this writing, every member of the Senate Armed Services Committee has been advised of the importance of H.R. 2512 and of the States' interest in its enactment. Yet, there is no guarantee that the bill will be considered by the Committee or, if considered, reported favorably to the Senate for passage.

If no further action takes place, H.R. 2512 again will expire upon the adjournment of the 88th Congress, and nearly eight years will have elapsed since the first effort was made to gain approval of this worthwhile and necessary legislation.



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President
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of the United States

The Legislative Process



The National GUARDSMAN

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Troops rushed to Europe or the Far East by air to meet an emergency now have full stocks of combat gear awaiting them, in concentration sites on land, or in handy shiploads, in a technique called "pre-positioning."

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