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Veterans Legislation Got Its Share of Attention from Michigan Lawmakers

(EDITORS NOTE: This is the fifth in a series of articles on laws which were passed at the 1949 session of the Michigan Legislature. They affect you and every resident of Michigan. The entire series is prepared as a public service of the State Bar of Michigan under the direction of Russell A. Seart, Lansing, chairman of the state bar committee on legislation and law reform. The articles are objective in nature and do not attempt to comment on the relative worth of the legislative enactments, but rather to present the most important facts and alert you to the changes these laws represent as they become effective on September 23, 1949.)

As in other years, especially since the start of World War II, veterans legislation came in for its full share of attention from the 1949 legislature. One such legislation was a bill amending the act which had created the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund, a \$50,000,000 fund established in 1945. Under the act, the \$50,000,000 fund is retained only in the income used. This income is used to assist needy Michigan veterans of World War II and their dependents.

Under the original act the funds were divided among local communities on the basis of their veteran population in each community. As a result, in sparsely populated communities there were instances in which moneys available would not defray the expenses of one hardship case.

Partly on Basis of Need To remedy this situation, the 1949 legislature amended the act to provide that 10 per cent of the earnings of the fund should

be allocated for distribution to local communities upon the basis of need, with the remaining 90 per cent still to be allocated upon the basis of veteran population.

The allocation is determined by the Michigan Veterans Trust Fund board of trustees which is the state body created to administer these funds. These funds are administered in the several communities by local committees composed of representatives of veterans' organizations and are only used for assisting veterans, not for any administration expenses. Such expenses are defrayed from other funds made available locally.

By two other acts, the legislature authorized the legislative bodies of counties, cities, villages, and township to extend from time to time such funds as it may determine for the operation of local councils of veterans affairs.

Veterans Bonus Act

Two important amendments were also made to the state Veterans' Bonus Act. The first of these was extended from March 19, 1949, to March 17, 1951, within which application for benefits under the provision of that act could be filed. The other amendment liberalized residential requirements for bonus applicants. Such amendments have a direct bearing upon more than 5,000 border line cases which are either pending before the adjutant general or have been referred by him to the state court of claims for final determination. As a result of such liberalization of residential requirements it is estimated that more than two-thirds of such applications will now be approved.

The large volume of work required by the determination of these doubtful claims occasioned another act by the legislature authorizing the appointment of an assistant to the commissioner of the court of claims. Claims which are referred by him to the court of claims.

Duty To Investigate
By an act adopted at a special session of the legislature held in 1948, the appointment of a commissioner of the court of claims was authorized. It was his duty to make investigation of such border line claims and make recommendations as the facts warranted to the court.

This was found to be more than a one-man job requiring the appointment of an assistant which was authorized by this legislature. By further amendment the veteran whose claim is denied must request the appeal thereof to the

court of claims. He has six months after notice of such denial within which to make such request. Previously such appeal followed automatically. This resulted in unnecessary review by the court of a number of groundless claims.

Veterans Preference Act
By a law first adopted at the time of the Spanish-American War but broadened by later amendments, honorably discharged members of the armed forces of the United States are given preference in state and municipal employment.

An amendment adopted at this session contemplated the possibility of a necessary reduction in public employment. It provided a basis for determining as to the employees who were retained and those who were to be discharged.

The status of such employees is to be determined upon a combined basis of seniority and quality of service, and those having the least seniority and quality of service are to be removed first.

In case of any employee who was in public employment at the time of entering military service and thereafter returns to such employment, the time spent in military service is to be included in his seniority.

Veterans Tax Exemption

Certain veterans and their widows are entitled to a homestead exemption of not to exceed \$2,000 from taxation under the general property tax act.

By another amendment, such exemption was broadened to include all contiguous unoccupied real property owned by the person qualified for such exemption even though the amount thereof exceeded the maximum amount of property included in a "homestead" under the definition of that term as used in our state constitution.

No Special Parking Privileges
An attempt to provide special parking privileges for veterans who suffered the loss of one or more legs in service and, as such, qualified under the federal act for assistance in receiving specially equipped automobiles provided to be fruitless.

Such amendment was adopted to our present motor vehicle act. However, late in the session a new motor vehicle code was adopted repealing the former act. The amendment was not included in the new codification.

Consequently, the amendment failed to amend the repeal of the act amended takes effect on the same day that the amendment repealing it takes effect. The next article in the series will treat legislation having to do with the Habitual Criminal Act.

Increased Federal Control of Business Displeases Bankers

Jesse P. Wolcott, congressman from the seventh district of Michigan, delivered the principal address at a meeting of Group 10 of the Michigan Bankers Association last week at the Oakland Hills Golf Club.

Approximately 280 bank executives, representing banks in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties, attended the meeting which was presided over by Guy E. Pooley, president of the Ecure-Lincoln Park Bank.

The following resolution, introduced by A. G. Ropp, executive vice-president of the Industrial National Bank of Detroit, was unanimously adopted:

"RESOLVED: That the bankers of Group 10—Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties, which includes Detroit, the arsenal of democracy, view with great concern the increasing tendency toward governmental participation in and regulation of business and industry, and desire by this resolution to encourage Representative Wolcott and his associates congressmen in their efforts to combat that trend by education and information."

National Exhibition Includes Works of 2 Cranbrook Painters

"Paintings from 25 Art Schools of the United States" opened Oct. 1 at the Museum of the Cranbrook Academy of Art and will continue through Oct. 23. "Textiles from the Museum Collection" will also be on exhibition at the same time.

Collected by the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Mass., Art Schools U.S.A., shows a rich diversity of styles in street scenes, nudes, still life, abstractions and portraits. Work of two Cranbrook students, Mat Framer and Robert Eaton, are included in the exhibit shown in the midwest by the American Federation of Arts.

Museum hours are from 2 to 5 daily except Mondays.

Classified ad deadline is 5 p.m. each Tuesday.

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