

STATEMENT OF SENATOR STROM THURMOND (S.C.) ON MAY 14, 1958,
IN MANAGEMENT OF H. R. 6908, CONCERNING HOSPITALIZATION
IN THE PHILIPPINES (Calendar No. 1498, Report No. 1469)

Mr. President, under Public Law 865 of the 80th Congress, which was approved on July 1, 1948, the United States financed the construction of the Veterans Memorial Hospital at Manila in the Republic of the Philippines. That Hospital was opened on November 20, 1955. Two years of experience of the operation of the hospital by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines have made it apparent that certain changes in the agreement under which the hospital is now operating would be mutually desirable, both to our Government and that of the Republic of the Philippines.

This legislation would authorize modification of the existing agreement so as to permit the following changes:

First, it would make it possible for the Administrator of Veterans Affairs in this country to contract for the hospital care of service connected veterans of the organized military forces of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, including recognized guerillas, while such forces were in the service of the armed forces of the United States.

Secondly, it would permit the Veterans Administration to pay for medical care rendered to American veterans in the Philippines for service connected disabilities.

Third, it would permit the hospital to provide out-patient care to veterans of the Philippine Commonwealth Army who, under the existing agreement, can only receive in-hospital services. By permitting the provision of out-patient services, the length of the hospitalization would be materially shortened and the cost of the hospitalization being provided patients today would be materially reduced.

Fourth, it would permit the provision of care in the hospital/to veterans who served in the old American Scouts in the United States Army/prior to the Philippine independence.

And finally, to the extent that beds are available, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines/would be given the right to admit its ^{non-veterans} own citizens to the hospital. This last provision is considered of utmost importance/inasmuch as this hospital is potentially one of the finest in the entire Far East/and if a sufficiently wide variety of cases can be admitted to the hospital, it could well become one of the finest teaching hospitals in that part of the world.

The Committee on Labor and Public Welfare has made several amendments to the bill/as it was received from the House. With one exception, all of those amendments are purely technical/and were adopted in order to bring this legislation into consonance with the language of P.L. 85-56, which consolidated and simplified previous veterans laws, including those concerning hospitalization.

The one non-technical amendment made by the Committee/is to limit care for non-service connected cases to those American veterans/who were domiciled in the Philippines before that country received its independence, and who are in financial need. This amendment means that veterans of our forces/who became bona fide residents of the Philippines while it was considered United States Territory/can receive the same services in this hospital as they would receive at one of our own veterans hospitals/if they were resident in the United States. It means, too, that this Government would assume no more responsibility/for veterans suffering from non-service connected disabilities — who chose to make their homes in the Republic of the Philippines after that nation had become independent — than it assumes for veterans who have decided to make their homes in other foreign nations.

The bill, Mr. President, is apparently non-controversial/and its prompt passage is considered desirable by the Veterans Administration and our Department of State.

Now, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee amendments be agreed to en bloc, and that the bill/as amended/be considered as original text for the purpose of amendment.