

AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS TO CONVEY CERTAIN LAND TO THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE, WIS.

JULY 29, 1955.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BYRD, from the Committee on Finance, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 6727]

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the bill (S. 2178) to authorize the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to convey certain land to the city of Milwaukee, Wis., having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment, and recommend that the bill do pass.

GENERAL STATEMENT

The bill, as reported, provides that the city of Milwaukee, Wis., must pay the fair market value of the land without improvements as determined by an independent appraiser selected by the city and the Veterans' Administration. The Veterans' Administration would interpose no objection to the bill.

By virtue of this act, the Committee on Finance accepts the report of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, which is as follows:

EXPLANATION OF THE BILL

The bill authorizes and directs the Administrator of the Veterans' Administration to convey to the city of Milwaukee, Wis., by quit-claim deed a tract of land containing approximately 4 acres which is presently under lease to the city of Milwaukee. It is provided that the city shall pay one-half of the market value of the tract of land as determined by an independent appraiser selected by the city and the Veterans' Administration. The exact legal description of the land to be conveyed shall be determined by survey made under the supervision of the Veterans' Administration.

The history of this particular question dates back to 1867 when the now Veterans' Administration center at Wood, Wis., was established as a National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. A total of 389.22 acres of land was acquired for that purpose. On July 21, 1930, Executive Order 5398, among other things, transferred this installation to the jurisdiction of the Veterans' Administration. There are presently operated at the center 1,275 hospital beds and 1,640 domiciliary beds. Since 1932 the Veterans' Administration has leased a tract of approxi-

mately 4 acres to the city of Milwaukee based on a consideration of \$1 a year. The city had constructed a 12 million capacity booster station with necessary equipment thereon. The act of September 1, 1949, directed the Administrator to convey to Milwaukee County for civic and recreational purposes a total of 101.5 acres of land situated within the boundaries of the Veterans' Administration center at Wood, Wis. The land was sold to Milwaukee County for \$35,000 and this conveyance resulted in separation of the leased 4-acre tract from the balance of the Veterans' Administration reservation.

The bill has been amended in accordance with suggestions contained in the Veterans' Administration report on the measure. The passage of the bill would not interfere with the present or prospective operation of the Veterans' Administration hospital at Wood, Wis. No objection therefore is interposed by the Veterans' Administration to the favorable consideration of this bill nor would any additional expenditure of Government funds be required as the result of its passage.

The report of the Veterans' Administration follows:

JUNE 21, 1955.

HON. OLIN E. TEAGUE,
*Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington 25, D. C.*

DEAR MR. TEAGUE: This is in reply to your request of June 9, 1955, for a report by the Veterans' Administration relative to H. R. 6727, 84th Congress, a bill to authorize the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to convey certain land to the city of Milwaukee, Wis.

The bill proposes to authorize and direct the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to convey to the city of Milwaukee, Wis., by quitclaim deed, a parcel of land containing approximately 4 acres, which is presently under lease to the city of Milwaukee, for the Milwaukee waterworks Menominee Valley booster station. The bill provides that the city shall pay one-half of the market value of the parcel of land, as determined by an independent appraiser selected by the city and the Veterans' Administration, and that the exact legal description of the land to be conveyed shall be determined by a survey to be made under the supervision of the Veterans' Administration.

The Veterans' Administration center, Wood, Wis., was established in 1867 as a National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, for which 389.22 acres of land were acquired. Pursuant to Executive Order 5398, dated July 21, 1930, which consolidated the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and other agencies into the Veterans' Administration, the installation at Wood was transferred to the Veterans' Administration. It is presently operated as a Veterans' Administration center consisting of 1,275 hospital beds and 1,640 domiciliary beds.

Since May 1932, the Veterans' Administration has leased a tract of approximately 4 acres of land located in the northeasterly corner of the reservation to the city of Milwaukee, Wis., based on a consideration of \$1 per year. The city constructed a 12 million gallon capacity booster station, with necessary pumping machinery and equipment, on that tract of land.

The act of September 1, 1949 (63 Stat. 683), in part, directed the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs to convey, by quitclaim deed, to Milwaukee County, Wis., for use for civic and recreational purposes, 2 parcels of land containing approximately 101.5 acres, which were situated within the boundaries of the Veterans' Administration center, Wood, Wis. Pursuant thereto, the Veterans' Administration sold the mentioned 2 parcels of land to Milwaukee County for \$35,000. This conveyance resulted in a separation of the leased 4-acre tract from the balance of the Veterans' Administration reservation.

As previously noted, the bill provides that the city of Milwaukee shall pay "one-half the market value of the said [4-acre] parcel of land," as determined by an independent appraiser selected by the city and the Veterans' Administration. Presumably, it is intended that the city shall pay one-half of the market value of the land, without improvements, although the language of the bill in this regard is ambiguous. For your convenience, there is enclosed a draft amendment which would clarify this intent. Further, it is noted that the proposal is silent as to whether it is intended that the city or the Veterans' Administration pay for the appraisal of the land, as well as the survey required by section 2. It is our view that the city should be required to assume these expenses. The enclosed draft of amendments would also accomplish this suggestion.

The Veterans' Administration is not informed of the factors considered in providing that the city shall pay one-half the market value of the land proposed for conveyance. However, it is felt that the question of what consideration

should be received for Federal real property when conveyed to States or local governments pursuant to this type of legislation, is a matter of broad national policy, concerning which the Veterans' Administration offers no comment. Since the General Services Administration is the agency primarily concerned with the disposal of Federal real property, your committee may desire to obtain the views of the Administrator of General Services in this regard.

It is believed that, subject to the foregoing suggestions, the transfer of the land in question to the city of Milwaukee, Wis., under the terms and conditions set forth in the bill, would not interfere with the present or prospective operation of the Veterans' Administration hospital at Wood, Wis. Accordingly, the Veterans' Administration would interpose no objection to the favorable consideration of H. R. 6727, if amended in the manner suggested.

The Veterans' Administration has not had sufficient time to ascertain from the Bureau of the Budget the relationship of this proposal to the program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

H. V. HIGLEY, *Administrator.*

Enclosure.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO H. R. 6727, 84TH CONGRESS

Immediately following the word "land" in line 10, page 1, insert a comma and "without improvements,".

Immediately before the period in line 2, page 2, insert "but paid by the city".

Immediately before the period in line 6, page 2, insert "but at the expense of the city".

