

Calendar No. 325

72D CONGRESS }
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
No. 310

FOR THE RELIEF OF RHETTA H. GUILD

FEBRUARY 24, 1932.—Ordered to be printed

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

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1403]

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1403) for the relief of Rhetta H. Guild, having considered the same report it back to the Senate and recommend that the bill do not pass.

The report of the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs is as follows:

VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, January 12, 1932.

HON. REED SMOOT,
Chairman Committee on Finance,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR SENATOR SMOOT: This is in reply to your communication of December 29, 1931, with which you forwarded for report a copy of S. 1403, Seventy-second Congress, "A bill for the relief of Rhetta H. Guild."

This bill proposes to provide that the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau shall be "authorized and directed to place on the rolls the name of Rhetta H. Guild, nee Rhetta Hamilton, as beneficiary of the insurance policy of Fred Mast, deceased, who left no relatives living who come within the provisions of section 402 of the war-risk insurance act, and amendments thereto of June 25, 1918, and December 24, 1919."

In connection with the war-risk insurance of Fred Mast, you are advised that the records of the Administration show that Fred Mast applied for \$10,000 yearly renewable term insurance on February 1, 1918, while in the military service of the United States at Camp Doniphan, Okla., designating Rhetta Hamilton, friend, as beneficiary. The soldier was killed in action in line of duty September 28, 1918.

The designated beneficiary, Rhetta Hamilton, who is now Mrs. Rhetta Hamilton Guild, made a claim for payment of the insurance, but as she was not within the permitted class of beneficiaries she was not, of course, entitled.

An investigation conducted by the Veterans' Bureau discloses that the deceased left surviving him, three brothers, Mr. Adolph Thomas, Mr. Louis Mast, and Mr. Rudolph Mast. The investigation was long drawn out because of the fact that these brothers were orphans from the time of their extreme youth and were placed in an orphans' home known as the Julia B. Work Training School, La Porte, Ind., from which they were apprenticed to different families in different States and thus had lost track of each other for a long period of time. As far

as the records of the administration show, the third of these brothers, Rudolph Mast, has never been found, but the proceeds of the insurance have nevertheless been paid as required by the statute to the administrator of the estate of the veteran, who has duly qualified under the laws of the State of Kansas.

Should Congress undertake, as it would have a right to do, to determine that Rhetta H. Guild should have relief, and specify the exact amount which should be paid to her as beneficiary of the insurance granted to Fred Mast, there would be no authority to question the right of this person to receive such amount and accordingly this office would have no alternative other than to make duplicate payments in this case. However, in passing, I desire to invite attention to the fact that the bill now under consideration merely authorizes and directs that the name of Rhetta H. Guild be placed on the rolls as designated beneficiary and states that Fred Mast left no living relatives who come within the provisions of section 402 of the war-risk insurance act, and amendments thereto. In my opinion, it is questionable whether, under the bill as now drawn, duplicate payments would be authorized.

Should the committee give further consideration to this proposed measure, it is suggested that the words "Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau" and "United States Veterans' Bureau" should be changed to "Administrator of Veterans' Affairs" and "Veterans' Administration," respectively.

It is believed that the committee will be able to determine from the above facts, the merits of this bill and the propriety of its passage.

I wish to suggest, however, that it would not appear from the facts of record in this office that this claim presents any greater merit than many others in which the veteran designated as beneficiary some person without the permitted class to whom it was impossible to make payments.

A copy of this letter is inclosed for your use.

Very truly yours,

FRANK T. HINES, *Administrator.*

