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Says About America's Merchant Seamen:

"In the face of trials that have not been fully told, this small force of men has supplied and maintained the vital link between the millions engaged in production and the millions fighting all over the world . . . Despite a hard and uncertain calling, they do not have . . . the protection of unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, group life insurance, pensions, or retirement plans."

Merchant Seamen's Bill of Rights

August 23, 1944, Admiral Land, in a letter to Congressman Bland, outlined the following recommendations:

• **HOSPITALIZATION AND MEDICAL CARE . . .** The present regulation of the Public Health Service requiring that a wartime like a peacetime merchant seaman apply for hospitalization and medical care within 60 days of the date of his last service should be eliminated, and the test of eligibility for permanent hospitalization and medical care should be a merchant seaman's war service connected illness or disability, or, if he be dead, dependency. Hospital care should include necessary travel allowances to and from the institution and a minimum allowance for clothing while there. Provision should also be made for institutional care of mental cases and for domiciliary care for disabled and aged merchant seamen.

This program will therefore probably necessitate additional facilities and new appropriations.

• **EDUCATION . . .** The merchant marine is, to a large extent, drawing its men from the youth of the country. Life at sea requires strong, young, healthy men. As of July 1, 1944, the training organization of the War Shipping Administration had trained 111,589 men for the merchant marine, of whom approximately 64 per cent were between the ages of 18 and 26. Since April 1, 1944, almost 15,000 boys between the ages of 16 and 18 have entered the training program. It is expected that many more 16-year-old boys will enter the training program before the end of the war. It is thus seen that thousands of young men have interrupted their normal education to enter the service of their country in the merchant marine. Adequate provision for their education should therefore be made.

• **EMPLOYMENT . . .** The duration of the war, however, and the extensive readjustment of the peacetime economy now in prospect, together with the considerable number of men recruited for the merchant marine who have had limited employment experience or none

at all in the pre-war economy, make it appear that the transition of merchant seamen to shore employment generally, including retraining for such employment, presents a larger and more pressing need than the limited job restitution now provided. Provision should therefore be made for job counseling, retraining, rehabilitation, and placement (including civil-service preference) of merchant seamen who desire shore employment, together with contact facilities throughout the country for the information and guidance of men so interested.

In addition, facilities should be maintained for the continued training of men who desire to continue to go to sea.

• **READJUSTMENT ALLOWANCES . . .** No one knows what labor force will be required to operate the post-war merchant fleet. But it seems inevitable that there will be extensive turn-over and resulting unemployment during the period of adjustment to commercial operation. . . .

The members of the merchant marine will be faced with the same problems of reestablishing or establishing themselves in the peace economy as will member of the armed forces. It is therefore felt that a system of loans for farms, small businesses, homes, etc., should be extended to them.

• **PROVISION FOR DEPENDENTS OF DECEASED SEAMEN . . .** Under the present insurance program provided by the War Shipping Administration, a merchant seaman is covered by \$5,000 life insurance against war risk and certain specified marine risks closely connected with operations of war. Every effort has been made to construe the insuring power as to war risk as broadly as possible in order that all cases may be paid where operations of war have substantially contributed to death. . . .

There are also a number of cases of loss of life where there is no recovery under a broad interpretation of war risk or war-related marine risk, and where there is no right of recovery at law. These involve principally deaths due to natural causes or accident where no negligence is present and where operations of war have not contributed to the cause of death. In these cases dependents are in no way provided for. We believe that the best solution is a system of dependency allowances which will cover all deaths during war service. . . .

It is therefore recommended that consideration be given to a system of allowances to dependents of seamen who lost their lives during war service, against which should be credited any insurance payments or recoveries at law which the dependents may have received.

• **DISABILITY PAYMENTS . . .** The War Shipping Administration provides insurance for merchant seamen against disability and dismemberment resulting from war risk and certain specified marine risks closely connected with operations of war up to \$5,000, and in certain cases an additional \$2,500 is provided. This protection is sufficient where the disability is not permanent. H. R. 4163, passed by the House and now pending in the Senate, will make provision for certain urgent cases of total permanent disability. Consideration should be given to the question of making comprehensive provision for all disability cases.

• **BURIAL . . .** Seamen have been sensitive over their ineligibility for use of the national flag at burial. This symbol of service to the Nation during time of war should be provided as well as a minimum burial fee, transportation of the remains, and the privilege of burial in national cemeteries.