

the patent political device which the legislative history of this Bill reflects in purporting to authorize a bonus.

The grave constitutional questions which arose because of premature action on this Bill were matters of public knowledge and the subject of repeated comment during the pendency of the legislation. It is significant that at the same time Senate Bill 48, also providing for a veterans' bonus, was pending in the Senate of Maryland. The Senate Bill had no constitutional infirmities resulting from procedural defects. This Bill, of definite constitutional validity, was passed by the Senate. Thereafter, it was introduced in the House and referred to the Rules Committee. The House then adjourned without taking action upon the Senate Bill.

The legislative background of the subject Bill has occasioned criticism of a legislative session otherwise conducted in an orderly manner with careful attention to procedural details. In fairness to the responsible leadership of the House of Delegates, I am reliably advised that officials of the House warned sponsors of the bill that they were proceeding illegally in forcing action on the measure prior to passage of the budget. The disregard of this warning has created considerable doubt that a majority of the Legislature seriously desired passage of a valid bonus bill, but merely sought to make political capital by sending to me one that would not stand the test of constitutionality. The expression of this view is not primarily mine, but that of the public.

It is my duty under the Constitution to act in accordance with its requirements, and under our division of Legislative and Executive powers, which has worked so well during the four years of my term, I am afforded the opportunity of considered judgment and study of legislative acts which is not always available to members of the Legislature. I believe that there are many sincere members who, upon reflection and after examination of the Attorney General's opinion, will agree with the conclusion I have reached in vetoing this Bill—that it is the only possible course of action consistent with honor and duty.

Yours very truly,

(s) THEODORE R. MCKELDIN,

Governor