

Mrs. R. L. Parker, chairman of the National Legislative Committee of the American Legion Auxiliary.

I feel now very appropriate being here this morning with this distinguished committee, especially with so many associated with us from the auxiliary and might I say here that we are most happy to have you with us and join with us this morning.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, it is a pleasure to express my personal gratitude and that of the membership of the American Legion for the opportunity to appear here this morning to speak briefly on that part of our legislative program which comes within the jurisdiction of this committee. Bearing in mind that mutual helpfulness is a prime purpose of the American Legion, I have no assignment of greater importance.

As you know, we are continually grateful for the special arrangements you have made to accommodate the Legionnaires and members of our auxiliary who came to share with me this honor and responsibility. They are a part of the more than 1,000 members participating this week in our eighth Washington conference, including the 45th Annual Rehabilitation Conference of the American Legion.

Because of our concern with veterans' affairs, national security, the Nation's posture in foreign affairs, Americanism, and child welfare, many of our standing national commissions will meet during the conference to review related programs of the American Legion within their areas of responsibility, and to formulate plans for their advancement.

Of particular importance to our organization are the studies and deliberations of two special groups. One of these, the Task Force for the Future, is a panel of seven members under the chairmanship of James F. Green of Nebraska, commissioned by me to make an intensive study of the organization of the American Legion and to suggest major changes, if this is what it takes, to help us make the most effective contribution to the Nation's greatness in the years ahead.

This task force will report its findings and recommendations to the organization's membership during the American Legion's 50th anniversary year, which begins this fall.

The second group, the 50th Anniversary Committee, is charged with the task of programming the 50th anniversary observance of the founding of the American Legion. Born in the crucible of war but devoted to peace, our organization has been an integral part of the fabric of American life throughout the almost 50 years since its founding. From the beginning, its objectives have included the strengthening of our way of life, maintenance of our national security, and aiding those who have fallen in battle or in the service of their country, and their widows and orphans.

As plans go forward to celebrate our golden anniversary, the American Legion continues as a strong, vigilant, and responsible organization of patriotic Americans dedicated to the maintenance of law and order, service to the community, State and Nation, and to the advancement of freedom under our democratic ideals.

Before continuing, let me say that the American Legion is deeply indebted to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of your committee, for its dedication to the cause of veterans.