

that we are still in session because of the national emergency that Harry Truman declared back in Korea. [Applause.]

Mr. SAYLOR. It seems to me if it is good enough to make Congress do it, there isn't any reason why the American Legion which Congress chartered shouldn't make those people who served in the Armed Forces during that time eligible for membership in our organization. [Applause.]

Mr. SAYLOR. Let me ask you, Mr. Commander, what is our membership right now?

Mr. GALBRAITH. As of now, it is about 2,225,000. This is this year, but the membership of last year was 2,600,000.

Mr. SAYLOR. I just got figures from your national office downtown. We boys from Pennsylvania are real proud again to be No. 1 as of the end of last month. [Applause.]

Mr. SAYLOR. That is almost twice as many as any other State so we just take the barbs around here. We still like to come along and prove that we support your organization.

Commander, there is a matter that I think you and your staff should be aware of. Everybody says what a great staff you have—and you do. I don't ask you to agree with me. I disagree with most everybody some time or other. But there is a matter that has come to my attention and I think it is a matter of concern or should be to every member of the American Legion.

Back in the 89th Congress, we passed a law that says that there would be 125,000 beds that the Veterans' Administration should maintain. Believe it or not, the 1969 budget submitted by the President reveals there were only 115,000 operating beds in 1967. That number was reduced to 112,000 in the current fiscal year. According to figures that we have just received, they expect to reduce it by 3,043 beds more.

In view of the expanding veterans population, what has your organization done to get on to this Administration that tells you that they are the great friend of the veteran and then reduces 5,500 beds in 2 years.

The reason I ask this: I asked the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs this question a month ago and I got an acknowledgment that he got my letter. But I don't have any explanation for it. I got a letter from the American Legion and the VFW and the DAV and the AMVETS and all of the rest of them telling that they are awful glad I asked that question but it shouldn't be up to me to ask that question.

That is what veterans' organizations are for. I want to know what kind of support we can expect from the American Legion to make sure we get back up to 125,000 beds.

Mr. GALBRAITH. Mr. Saylor, you have asked a question that has been one of our concern for some time. Each year, through our resolutions committee at our national conventions, this has been one of the points on the rehabilitation that we continued to ask for more beds for our veterans.

Mr. SAYLOR. I want to say that we should get it back up to 125,000. They keep telling me they are taking care of more veterans all the time. It is a little difficult for me to understand this Chinese game of numbers. You have got less beds but you are taking care of more people. I realize that we have made some advances in medicine and all that. But the only thing I can tell you is that it must be that the turnovers are better. I would still like to see 125,000 beds for veterans.