

nonpartisanship that exists in this wonderful committee. We have differences of opinion, but when the law or the bill is being reported it is the best interest of the veterans of our great country that is our concern.

I know you are in trying times, that the administration wanted to close hospitals. I come from the great city of Buffalo, where we will lose one of our aides, Mr. Kronberg. He is being called to another section of the country, I understand. He has played a very vital role, and I think by personal visits of our great chairman and the cooperation of all the members of this committee, that we were able to retain many of the hospitals that had been scheduled to be closed.

I note there are many programs you have here. I think the gentleman from Florida has expressed the opinion that this member has, that your organization has played a very vital role in the legislative history of this committee, and I do not think there should be one veteran from the DAV that should be hindered in any way by legislation or limitations. In that category, we are limited by budgetary considerations and that is why my friend, Mr. Saylor, has expressed very eloquently the limitations of certain bills. But as a member of this committee for the past decade I can say I supported every piece of legislation that the DAV has offered.

Last but not least, I am very grateful for the great contribution that the DAV committee has made when we had legislation in the Post Office and Civil Service Committee pertaining to veterans preference.

Again, I say it is a personal privilege to be a member of this great committee. Thank you and God bless you.

Mr. HALEY. The Chair now is going to skip over a little seniority and recognize the gentlelady from Massachusetts.

Mrs. HECKLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I should like to also express my appreciation for the very comprehensive and thoughtful statement made by the commander of the DAV. I think that he has expressed the leadership of this great organization very eloquently and very persuasively for the members of our committee.

I would like to assure you, Mr. Commander, that these recommendations that you have so well presented to us will not gather dust in the files but will be the subject of very careful consideration and, hopefully, legislation forthcoming in this session of Congress.

I should like to single out in particular the suggestion or proposal that you have made on page 8 of your statement, Mr. Commander, in which you approve the extension of hospital care in VA hospitals to widows and children of veterans who died of service-connected disabilities and to wives and children of veterans who have disabilities rated as total.

I feel this is a very significant proposal.

Recently, in a visit to a Boston veterans hospital, one which has a great reputation internationally for the spinal work done there, I learned that there were some beds that were not being used. Some of the doctors there felt that it would be better for maintaining the caliber of medical service as well as for the great benefit to the wives of veterans to have these beds used than to allow them to remain unused. Of course, the veteran deserves the first preference. When there are