THE DISASTROUS STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BRYANT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRYANT. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here today. I do have the high honor of representing the Seventh District of Tennessee. Both that district and the State itself has a very strong and diverse economy.

Included as part of the base of that economy is agriculture, and as I would follow on the heels of my colleague, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), his statements, our agriculture in Tennessee and in this country is in a disastrous state, something that we ought to all be concerned with here in Congress. As we work to satisfy the number of issues that are out there that cover the board, we cannot forget about agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I have had several meetings in my district where I talked to different constituencies, and that is a consistent complaint that we hear; that while we are doing well in our industries, our manufacturing, our distribution across the State, the agricultural communities, not only the farmers and beef producers, the pork producers, but the communities in which they live, the banks, the equipment dealers, the stores, the retailers, are all suffering along with them.

I have been told that in effect what is happening in the agricultural communities is that they are being paid 1950s prices, but yet their expenses are 1999 expenses today. I would challenge any part of our economy to operate under those standards, that you are getting paid like you were in 1950, but your expenses are today's expenses. You cannot exist very long in that type of situation.

When we came to Congress in 1994, we did a lot of good things. One of the good things we did was try to turn our farmers loose to compete like everybody else; to lift up all the programs and restraints that they had and to let them compete in this world market, this global market that we are in.

One of the commitments we made to these farmers, in addition to lifting these restraints and saying, you are on your own, go out and do the best you can, one of the conditions we laid out was that we will help you with the estate tax.

Despite what the previous speaker, my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts, said, this tax bill that we passed last week does wonderful things for our farmers. It does in fact help them with the estate tax. When the family farm can be passed along with less estate tax being paid, it is more likely that the heirs, the children of that farmer, will be able to keep that family farm.

I would suggest that this bill we passed last week, this tax reform, goes to more than just 300 of the richest Americans out there, it goes to our farm owners, our small businesses in our smaller communities.

Another thing that we did in that tax bill was help our farmers through self-insured insurance. When they buy their own insurance, they can deduct that total premium for that. This 10 percent across-the-board tax break, this applies to farmers, also.

One of the other requirements that we promised them back when we lifted the programs was that we would help them in our markets, help them stabilize their markets. When they raise all their crops, have the good years, when they win the battle over the droughts and too much rain and bugs and pests that come out to destroy their crops, they still have to sell those crops somewhere. We promised them we would help stabilize the markets.

I would simply ask my colleagues, every time that we have an opportunity to vote on these kinds of issues that pertain to boycots and embargoes against other countries, particularly as they deal with food and fiber, that we be careful there that we do not always do that at the blink of an eye.

Another commitment we made to our farmers was regulatory relief. We said we would make it easier for them to farm, and yet, we hear stories in committees that I sit in about the Environmental Protection Agency coming in and wanting to take away some of the chemicals that our farmers use to be able to be as successful as they are in producing basically the food for the world.

Now we are being told that maybe they cannot use some of these chemicals, or that some of their land may be a wetland and that it ought to be in a position where they cannot use it to farm. They pay taxes on it, they own it, but they cannot farm it.

I am simply saying that our farmers are the best stewards of the lands that we have. They have to be good stewards. They have to be environmentalists. They want to take care of the land because it is their source of living. There are not any better stewards of land out there than the farmers.

I would remind my colleagues that when we get into these kinds of issues, I would ask that we remember our farmers. We have to keep them in mind. A lot of people seem to think, and I say this jokingly, though, that the food starts in the grocery store, and that the fiber or clothing that we buy starts in the department stores. They do not think anything about what causes that to appear in the stores. They simply think it is there when they go buy something, and it will always be there. But we have to keep our farmers in mind as we deal with the panoply of legislation that we deal with.

I simply use my 5 minutes of time this afternoon to remind my colleagues of the importance of our agricultural communities.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND FEDERAL SPENDING PRIORITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about national priorities and Federal budget needs. It is now estimated that the budget surpluses over the next 10 years, not counting social security surpluses, will be a little under $1 trillion. Now everyone in Washington wants to figure out how to spend that $1 trillion.

Last week we saw the Republican plan for that money. Last week the House of Representatives passed a bill to use almost the entire surpluses, $792 billion of the projected $966 billion surpluses for the next 10 years, for a tax cut, a tax cut heavily slanted to the rich, a tax cut in which 1 percent of taxpayers will get 30 percent of the tax relief, and a tax cut that is back end loaded and will cost an additional $2 trillion in revenues in the second 10 years, just when the baby boomers will be retiring and necessitating huge new expenditures for social security and Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, last week the House of Representatives also passed the defense appropriations bill, which will spend $266 billion for defense programs, $2.8 billion more than the administration requested. When combined with other military spending bills, the total defense spending will be $288 billion this year, about $8 billion more than the President's request and almost $10 billion more than the cap set by the 1997 Balanced Budget Act.

Thankfully, that bill did not include funding to purchase the Rolls Royce of the sky, the F–22 jet fighter. There is still a very real danger the funding for the F–22 will be restored in conference. That would be a huge mistake. For the price of each F–22 plane at $200 million per plane, it will be too expensive to risk in combat. For each F–22, you could repair 117 American schools, you could build 33 new elementary schools, or enroll 40,000 more children in Head Start. Is that not a better use of taxpayer funds?

However, when Congress cut the F–22, it did not use the funds for schools or children, it used the funds for more defense spending. Members of Congress cannot wait to bust the budget caps and spend millions more for defense, but we have not done the same for domestic social programs. We all know every penny we spend on the military will not be available to strengthen social security, build affordable housing, extend health care coverage to millions of Americans, or pay down the national debt, and yet we are still talking about devastating cuts to vital Federal programs, included social security.

The surplus we hear so much about is based on the assumption that most domestic programs will be cut far past the bone. Simply providing enough funding for non-defense discretionary

programs to keep pace with inflation would require an additional $590 billion over the next 10 years.

Factoring in an allowance for the average level of emergency appropriations would require another $100 billion. If these limited funds are spent instead on the Republican tax cut, it would mean an average 27 percent cut in all domestic programs by 2009.

Mr. Speaker, in 1981, President Reagan and the Republicans led us over the edge of a cliff. They thought we could have a large tax cut and increase defense spending. Sound familiar? The result was an increase in our national debt, the accumulated deficits since George Washington, from $800 billion in 1981, when Ronald Reagan took office, to $4.3 trillion in 1993 when Bill Clinton was sworn in.

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In 1992, the deficit was $290 billion, with annual deficits of $500 billion projected for the mid-1990's. The Clinton deficit reduction plan of 1993, passed without a single Republican vote, began our climb out of the abyss. Now after 7 years of strong economic growth and careful management of government resources, including reduction of the Federal work force of 370,000, we have reached high ground.

We balanced budgets and projected surpluses, and this pains our Republican colleagues. They do not want either to pay down the national debt, as the President proposes, or to initiate long-postponed investments in our schools and day-care centers and our cities and our colleges, our Medicare, and Head Start.

We ought to invest this money, instead, in our people, in our schools, and our infrastructure in order to keep our economy growing. With the strong robust economy, we can meet the needs facing Social Security while we invest in other social programs to improve the lives of all Americans.

So the message is clear tonight. We cannot postpone any longer our long-postponed investments in schools and day-care centers and roads and bridges and railroads and Medicare and Head Start and housing. Now is the time to shift budget priorities to reflect future needs to help working families to have an educated work force, to build up our country's infrastructure so that we can keep economic growth at a high level that will generate the money to pay for it and that will pay for the money to pay for the Medicare and for Social Security as our baby boomers start to retire.

Let us not fritter this away on a tax cut for the rich and on unneeded defense spending on unneeded Rolls Royce programs.

TRIBUTE TO KOREAN WAR VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the 46th anniversary of the end of the Korean War. So I think it is a fitting time to remember and pay tribute to all Americans who fought and died in that war.

Yesterday, I had the privilege of speaking at a Korean War Memorial Service in Fultondale, Alabama. There, the names of 672 Alabamans, who died or are missing in action in that war, names were called. It was a very emotional service. We had a 21-gun salute. Relatives placed flowers at the memorial.

I gave a speech, and the veterans at that memorial asked me to again give that speech tonight in tribute to their fallen comrades and to all of those who served in Korea, those who died, and the 8,000 who are still missing in action as a result of that war.

I will place in the RECORD the names of those 672 Alabamans who paid it all in Korea.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the Bible, God calls on his people, on his children to remember, to remember the wonderful works that he has done, to remember his miracles, to remember all that he has done for them.

When we read the Bible, we are sometimes frustrated that the children of Israel continually forgot the good things that God had done for them. We sometimes say why were they so unappreciative? Why did they forget? Why did they fail to remember?

But are we so different? Is not our treatment and our ignorance of the Korean War not a parallel? We forgot a whole war and the sacrifices made there. Why did we forget? Why were we so unappreciative for the 37,000 Americans who died there? Why do we not know a lot about that or the fact there are 8,000 missing to this day?

The Korean War was concluded, not with the enemy's surrender, but with a negotiated armistice that reestablished the existing borders between North and South Korea. It left an uneasy peace that exists even today.

With tens of thousands of young Americans brutally killed and a war occurring in such a remote and inhospitable land so far away with no victory to celebrate, the Korean War gave most Americans little to remember and much to forget.

For that reason, the Korean War is today called the ''Forgotten War,'' and it is often spoken of as the Forgotten War. However, there is much to remember about this war, much to remember about those who left farms and factories, high school classrooms and college campuses to defend our freedom.

From Alabama, there were four brothers, the Goodwin brothers. They all survived Korea. They came home with eight purple hearts. Mr. Goodwin, Bob Goodwin from Birmingham, was there yesterday to lay flowers at the memorial.

Today, we recall, and we remember. We are not here to cheer or to celebrate, but to reflect on the sacrifices that were made so long ago, to remember the living, those who survived and are not here today, and those who died and lie buried about us and those, as I said, 8,000 whose bodies were never recovered, who were never buried here in the United States.

World War II had followed World War I, the war to end all wars. The long struggle against Nazism and imperialism was over, and America, although victorious, was so weary of war. America and her people knew well the cost, the horror, and the sacrifice of war.

But that did not prevent 1½ million of America's finest patriots from leaving their homes or friends to serve. Halfway around the world they went or, as so aptly described in the Korean War Memorial, to ''a place they had never been and a people they had never met.''

As William Sessions, the father of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), said, ''They went not for conquest and not for gain, but only to protect the anguished and the innocent. They suffered greatly and by their heroism in a thousand forgotten battles they added a luster to the codes we hold most dear: duty, honor, country, fidelity, bravery, and integrity.''

These were citizen soldiers. But for the most part, they were not skilled in war. They were ordinary young men and women like our sons and daughters.

We should remember, too, the hardships our Korean War veterans endured: the deadly cold, the weeks and months spent crammed in foxholes and bunkers dug into rugged, harsh terrain. They faced an enemy of overwhelming numbers ready to torture and brutalize. They were locked in hand-to-hand combat at ''Heartbreak Ridge'' and ''Pork Chop Hill,'' confronted with the fastest fighter jets at ''Mig Alley.''

Today's military history records that our Korean veterans set a standard of courage that may be matched, but which will never be surpassed.

In summary, chiseled in silver on the Korean War Memorial are the words ''Freedom is not free.'' The men and women who served in Korea and the family and friends of those 37,000 who never returned and those thousands still missing have paid it all. They demonstrate the high and precious cost of freedom.

We should never forget that these patriots paid a price one by one when they were swept away by the treacherous tides of Inchon or died defending the perimeter of Pusan or froze to death by the hundreds at Chosan reservoir or in the long march back. Their families will never forget their sacrifice and neither should we.

Now on this hot sunny, summer day, Mr. Speaker, let me simply sum up by saying, today we know that those, that first resolute action by these veterans