existing $4.8 trillion Federal debt is a sort of grotesque parallel to the engerizer bunny that appears and appears and appears on television—the same way that the Federal debt keeps going and going and going—up, of course, always to the added burdens on the American taxpayers.

So many politicians talk a good game—and talk is the operative word—about reducing the Federal deficit and bringing the Federal debt under control.

In any event, Mr. President, as of yesterday, Monday, June 26, at the close of business, the total Federal debt stood—down to the penny—at exactly $4,889,052,929,226.24 or $18,558.93 per man, woman, child on a per capita basis. Res ipsa loquitur.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC–1130. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, a draft of proposed legislation entitled ''The District of Columbia Emergency Highway Relief Act''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–1131. A communication from the Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1993; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1132. A communication from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the proceedings of the Judicial Conference; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1133. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual actuarial report for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

EC–1134. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Health, United States, 1994''; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

EC–1135. A communication from the Chairman of the Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a proposal relative to authorized committees of presidential and vice presidential candidates; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 968. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to prohibit the import, export, sale, purchase, and possession of bear viscera or products that contain or claim to contain bear viscera, and for other purchases; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BRADLEY (for himself, Mrs. KASSEBAUM, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 969. A bill to require that health plans provide coverage for a minimum hospital stay for a mother and child following the birth of the child, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mrs. HUTCHISON:

S. 970. A bill to authorize the Administrator of General Services to enter into agreements for the construction and improvement of border stations on the United States international borders with Canada and Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. COATS (for himself, Mr. HELMS, Mr. GREGG, and Mr. ASHCROFT):

S. 971. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination in the training and licensing of health professionals on the basis of the refusal to undergo or provide training in the performance of induced abortions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mr. DASCHLE (for himself, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. AKAKA):

S. 972. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for medicaid coverage of all certified nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. INOUYE:

S. 973. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of residential ground rents, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 974. A bill to prohibit certain acts involving the use of computers in the furtherance of crimes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself and Mr. BRADLEY):

S. Res. 142. A resolution to congratulate the New Jersey Devils for becoming the 1995 NHL champions and thus winning the Stanley Cup; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 968. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to prohibit the import, export, sale, purchase, and possession of bear viscera or products that contain or claim to contain bear viscera, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

THE BEAR PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I introduce the Bear Protection Act. This measure is aimed at controlling poaching of bears such as the American black bear which is found in Kentucky. It addresses several enforcement and jurisdictional loopholes that are caused by a patchwork of State laws. The current inconsistencies enable a wildly profitable underground black market for bear parts to flourish in the United States.

Mr. President, my bill would in no way affect legal hunting of bears. Hunters would still be allowed to keep trophies and furs of bears killed during legal hunts. This measure would only prohibit the sale or barter of the internal organs of the bear which are referred to as bear viscera.

This bill is made necessary because of the booming illegal trade in bear viscera. At least 18 Asian countries are known to participate in the illegal trade in bear parts. Bear viscera are also illegally sold and traded in large urban areas in the United States such as San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, and New York City. These cities serve as primary ports for export shipments of these goods.

Bear parts, such as gall bladders, are used in traditional Asian medicine to treat everything from diabetes to heart disease. Due to the increasing demand for bear viscera, the population of Asian black bears has been totally annihilated over the last few years. This has led poachers to turn to American bears to fill the increasing demand. I, for one, will not stand by and allow our own bear populations to be decimated by poachers.

Mr. President, it is estimated that Kentucky has only 50 to 100 black bears remaining in the wild. Black bears once roamed free across the Appalachian mountains, through the rolling hills of the bluegrass, all the way to the Mississippi river. Although we cannot restore the numbers we once had, we can insure that the remaining bears are not sold for profit to the highest bidder.

Poaching has become an astoundingly profitable enterprise. It is estimated that over 40,000 bears are poached in the United States every year. That equals the number that are taken by legal hunting.

Mr. President, the main reason behind these astounding numbers is greed. In South Korea, bear gall bladders are worth their weight in gold, and an average bear gall bladder can bring as high as $10,000 on the black market.

Currently, U.S. law enforcement officials have little power to address the poaching of bears and the sale of their parts in an effective manner. The Department of the Interior has neither the manpower nor the budget to test all bear parts sold legally in the United States. Without extensive testing, law