

We will also take care of the continuing resolution problem.

I am optimistic. I hope if we work on this in a bipartisan, nonpartisan way today, we can come together with some agreement.

We left the White House last night and we agreed we would be very positive in our statements to the media. I must say some of us were and some of us were not. I was a little disappointed in comments from some of my Democratic colleagues after we said, very honestly, we had a very candid meeting, we had a very candid discussion and were trying to work something out.

We have made some progress, and I think we have. We will see what happens after the meeting with Chief of Staff Panetta, Senator DOMENICI, and others, and hopefully we will be able to announce to our colleagues sometime tonight or sometime this afternoon or late evening that we have reached some agreement and we can pass a temporary continuing resolution.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the call of the quorum be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Senator from North Dakota.

TRAIN WRECK IS NO ACCIDENT

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me share the sentiments offered by the majority leader moments ago that both sides get together early today and resolve this issue.

Let me also disagree on one statement. This is not about whether there should be a balanced budget. Of course there should be a balanced budget. I think all Members of the Senate agree there should be a balanced budget and a plan to bring the fiscal policies in this country into balance.

The question is, how? How do we do that? Where do we make cuts? Who bears the brunt of those cuts? Who bears the brunt of the sacrifice?

I will read from an editorial written by David Gergen, who served both the Republican and Democratic Presidents. He said, in giving the Republicans credit for pushing for a balanced budget:

But in their eagerness to satisfy one principle, fiscal responsibility, the Republicans would ask the country to abandon another, equally vital, principle—fair play. This is a false, cruel choice we should not make.

When George Bush and then Bill Clinton achieved large deficit reductions, we pursued the idea of "shared sacrifice." Not this time. Instead, Congress now seems intent on imposing new burdens upon the poor, the elderly, and vulnerable children while, incredibly, delivering a windfall for the wealthy.

That is what this issue is about, not whether the budget should be balanced. Of course it should. It is how it is balanced and whether there is fair play involved.

I want to make one additional point. We come to a shutdown not by accident, in my judgment. Let me read some quotes. We have heard boasts in this town about shutdowns for some months. April 3, this year, NEWT GINGRICH, Speaker GINGRICH, vowed to "create a titanic legislative standoff with President Clinton by adding vetoed bills to must-pass legislation increasing the national debt ceiling."

April 3, Speaker GINGRICH boasted the President will "veto a number of things, and we'll put them all on the debt ceiling. And then he'll decide how big a crisis he wants."

June 3, Speaker GINGRICH:

We're going to go over the liberal Democratic part of the Government and then we will say to them: We could last 60 days, 90 days, 120 days, 5 years, a century. There's a lot of stuff we don't care if it is ever funded.

June 5, Speaker GINGRICH, speaking about the President:

He can run the parts of the government that are left [after the Republican budget cuts] or he can run no government. Which of the two of us do you think worries more about not showing up?

September 22, Speaker GINGRICH:

I don't care what the price is. I don't care if we have no executive offices and no bonds for 30 days—not this time.

Investor's Business Daily, November 8, GINGRICH said he would force Government to "miss interest and principal payment for the first time ever to force Democrat Clinton's administration to agree to his deficit reduction." Budget Chairman JOHN KASICH said:

We'll probably have a few train wrecks, but that's always helpful in a revolution.

The point I make is we do not arrive at this issue accidentally. This is an issue that is planned by persons who, as David Gergen says in his analysis, have decided to balance the budget by adding to the burdens of the children, the poor, the vulnerable in society, and incredibly, he says, delivering a windfall for the wealthy.

Some of us think that is not the way to do business. Others apparently think it is a perfect way for the Federal Government to behave and, if it does not behave that way, they want to force the Federal Government to shut its doors.

That is not, in my judgment, a thoughtful way to do public policy. Rather, I think, it is a thoughtless, reckless approach to public policy, and I hope that sometime today in some way the leadership of both parties and the President will agree to this bridge or stopgap legislation to get us to De-

ember when we then clearly debate the larger reconciliation package.

This is just the road on the way to the stadium. The main event, the main contest in December over the big reconciliation bill is not what this is about. This is the toll extracted on the road to the stadium. It makes no sense to me to see the Government shut down in these circumstances.

I read these quotes from Speaker GINGRICH and others to demonstrate it is no accident. I am sure there are people who take great delight in the fact that there is no agreement on a continuing resolution or on a debt extension; they take great delight in that because they have accomplished what they boasted about to some months.

I think there is no credit for anyone in this kind of failure. I hope more thoughtful voices, more responsible voices in both political parties today will resolve to decide to bridge this impasse and provide a continuing resolution and a debt extension to take us into mid-December when we finally come to grips with the continuing resolution.

There is no disagreement among Democrats and Republicans about whether this country ought to balance its budget. There is profound disagreement among many of us in this country who believe you ought not kick kids off Head Start and take health money away from old folks so we can build B-2 bombers and Star Wars.

There is profound disagreement about priorities, but not about goals of balancing the Federal budget. While we have speakers today trying to debate what this debate is about, I want people of this country to understand this debate is about priorities—not destinations or goals. We all want to balance the Federal budget.

There is a right way and a wrong way to do it. On the road to finding the right way to do it, the wrong approach is to shut the Government down as boasted by Speaker GINGRICH and others they would do for some months. That serves no one's interest and does not accomplish any useful purpose for this country, in my judgment.

HONORING DESMOND AND MARY ANN LEE FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION IN ST. LOUIS, MO

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, today I rise to honor two dear friends of mine whose generosity and giving spirit have made a positive impact on many throughout their home of St. Louis, MO. This week Desi and Mary Ann Lee were honored by the Missouri Botanical Garden as winners of the 1995 Henry Shaw Medal, the highest honor presented by the Garden. The Lees were honored for their generosity and service to the Botanical Garden by their establishment of the E. Desmond Lee and Family education program. The program is designed to improve science education for underserved