

Let me comment on the \$6 billion my colleague mentioned. It is simply not the case that people over here say we do not want to spend enough on agriculture. That is not the case. My colleague knows that is not the case. The fact is, we are not debating the baseline for the 7-year period on agriculture. If we were debating that, the debate on the baseline is that the majority party's budget cut far more than twice as much from the baseline than the budget cuts that we had offered. If we are going to debate baselines, that is what we ought to debate. And I would be glad to do that, but I also want to go on to another brief subject.

#### A WAY TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I was very heartened a few minutes ago by the discussion of the Senator from Mississippi, Senator LOTT, in which he talked about something that a number of us had advocated and the President advocated last evening.

In fact, Senator EXON and I were in a press conference about a week or so ago. At that time we said one idea about resolving the budget issue is to package up each side's offer, take the lower spending cut on each of the offers. When you add all that up you reach \$711 billion in spending cuts and you reach savings sufficient so you can balance the budget. Why do we not do that?

The President came to the floor of the Chamber of the House last evening and said let us do that. Let us at least do that. We can just take the lower of the two offers from the Republicans and the Democrats. We can take the lower in each spending category of the two offers of saving money in every category. Then you have \$711 billion, which is sufficient to balance the budget.

What I heard this morning is that the Speaker of the House suggested that might be a good thing. Senator LOTT indicated that makes a lot of sense. If we are moving in that direction, I am enormously heartened by that. It is a way to move towards a balanced budget, do it with the right priorities and do it in the right way.

If we can do that, we can solve the problems of the CR, the debt limit. We can have a clean appropriations extension, pass a clean debt limit and agree on taking \$711 billion of savings. As a result we can balance this Federal budget. Then we will have done something, I think, of substantial good for this country.

So I would just say that I feel heartened by at least the little snippets I have heard today, first on television this morning by the Speaker, and next in a discussion by Senator LOTT. Maybe there is a formula here for breaking this gridlock and actually reaching results with respect to a 7-year balanced budget plan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition? The distinguished Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, we are in morning business as I understand it?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business expired at 5:30, but the Senator may request to proceed under morning business.

Mr. EXON. Has time been limited for Senators in morning business when we were in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We had been under a 5-minute guideline.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I ask I may be allowed to proceed under the same rules for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE FARM BILL

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, there are two things I want to talk about. First, I have heard some of the discussion with regard to farm policy by some of my closest friends and colleagues on both sides of the aisle today. It is a pretty sad situation when I see that the usual farm coalition between Democrats and Republicans is obviously breaking down. I think it is a tragedy of major proportions.

I would simply say, there are those of us who feel we should stay in session for lots of reasons, not the least of which is to pass a farm bill. If we cannot come to some kind of an agreement, I hope the majority leader will simply call up the farm bill for discussion, debate it on the floor of the U.S. Senate, pass something, and send it to the President and see if he will sign it.

The President, I might add, has been very supportive of the position for funding of agriculture that this Senator, as the lead Democrat on the Budget Committee, has been for a long, long time. We have a profarm advocate sitting at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the President of the United States of America. We should continue to build and work with him.

The various moves that have been made with regard to the Freedom To Farm Act that I do not agree with I will not vote for. I will simply correct something I thought I heard, that all major farm organizations have supported the Freedom To Farm Act. The Farmers Union is a major farm organization in the State of Nebraska. The Farmers Union is not only against the Freedom To Farm Act, it thinks it is folly.

I would say to all of my colleagues, this Senator yesterday had printed in the RECORD some true facts with regard to how far down the welfare road we are going under the Freedom To Farm Act. In summarizing what I put in the RECORD yesterday on page S 321 under Exhibit 1, for a 500-acre farm, 120 bushels to the acre in corn yield, the present cash price is in the vicinity of \$3.10. That would be \$186,000 gross—not net, gross—that the farmer would receive.

On top of that, under the Freedom To Farm Act, there is a welfare payment that goes to corn farmers. I think, when all the corn farmers found out about this, and especially when the public found out about it, there would be a revolution, and the Freedom To Farm Act would fall by the wayside, because, in the example that I have just given, a farmer would receive a check from the Federal Government for 1996 of \$16,200 on top of the \$186,000 gross that he got from his crop.

That might not be so bad. You might argue that is still a good thing, at \$3.10 a bushel for corn. But most people in and outside the business recognize that \$3.10 a bushel for corn is a pretty good price and one we can be satisfied with. The point is, if it were \$5 a bushel or \$7 a bushel, which I do not think it will ever go to, but whatever the price of corn would be under the Freedom To Farm Act, this typical farmer, and every farmer who is in a similar situation, which is typical, would receive a check from the Government regardless of the price of corn in the marketplace. That is welfare. That is an excessive amount of money.

I am for freedom-to-farm principles, giving them the decisions they can make out there on the farm. I am for simplifying. But I simply say there is a fault here in the Freedom To Farm Act that is a giveaway.

#### DO NOT RECESS THE SENATE

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I wanted to make just a few comments, if I might, with regard to what I consider to be a very ill-advised move, and that is the consideration that maybe, after Friday, we are going to recess the U.S. Senate, right in the middle of very important negotiations. I would simply say, Mr. President, we should stay here, work on the farm bill, work on the debt ceiling, work on the budget, and come up with a compromise. Certainly I, too, was pleased with the President's address last night and the acceptance, generally, as I understand it, of Speaker GINGRICH and leading Republicans in the U.S. Senate that says to take this \$711 billion and balance the budget in 7 years, with CBO scoring, which we have all been for.

We cannot do those things, we cannot solve the crisis in the debt ceiling, by leaving here and not coming back until 2 or 3 days before we would have default. I hope, and I appeal, for both the House and the Senate to remain in session and do our work, especially at this critical time with regard to the farm bill and the other important matters that we have on our plate.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

#### REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BODY ON NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last November, the British and Irish Governments acted jointly to create an innovative three-member committee,