

and that \$4 billion is exactly equal to what the President had been suggesting all last year what should come from programs in an effort to balance the budget.

Mr. President, I think the debate today is bigger than the debate about just the farm bill. The debate today is what the last election was all about, whether or not we are going to continue to do business as usual or whether or not there is going to be some changes. The people in the last election sent a message—no longer business as usual.

It seems to me, as far as agriculture is concerned, no longer business as usual is that we do not continue to rely on 1949 legislation as backup legislation. The 1949 act was written for agriculture of the 1940's and 1950's, when all we were concerned about was domestic consumption and production to meet that domestic demand. It was all based upon allotments, a great deal of Government regulation, and a great deal of decisionmaking, even more than under the 1990 farm bill, here in Washington, DC. That is not the farm environment, the agricultural economic environment of the 1990's, and it surely is not for the next century. The 1990 farm bill is not even a Government program for the next century.

So what we tried to develop this year was a farm program that would bring us around to a point where we could meet the demands for agriculture in the next century and the realities of the world trading environment. That is what freedom to farm is all about, to provide transition payments that are certain payments that will get us from 1996 until the year 2002, with farmers being able to make decisions on what to plant and what to market based upon the marketplace and not on the decisions of faceless bureaucrats in Washington, and, lastly, not to set aside our productive capacity, but to produce for the demands of the world marketplace and to tell our world competition that we are going to do it and compete with every market we can and meet that world competition.

That is what the legislation that we got 53 votes today for is intended to do. But "business as usual" are people, as the vote went today, mostly on the other side of the aisle, as I can see it, who want to maintain Government involvement in the decisionmaking for the farmer, to have the possibility of not producing to capacity to meet the world marketplace, the demands of the hungry around the world, and to make sure that we have a roller coaster of Government support for agriculture—high payments when prices are moderate and no payments when prices are higher.

What is wrong with that, Mr. President, is, as we transition into an agriculture environment that meets world competition and trade, there is not any certainty in that as there is in the freedom to farm bill.

There are some farm organizations, Mr. President, who actually believe

that the Government ought to have their fingers into every aspect of agriculture. I believe they will not be satisfied until there is as much regimentation of American agriculture as there is of European agriculture by the European governments.

Business as usual on the farm debate is a desire to maintain the fingers of Government into agriculture to the greatest extent possible. It is all right to do that if that is what you believe. But it is not, it seems to me, right in the process to blame Republicans when you cannot have a farm bill when the President of the other party vetoed it and we had 53 votes on a bipartisan bill to pass it this year or a bipartisan vote to get it out of the House Agriculture Committee earlier this week.

It seems to me it is OK to have that philosophy of maintaining Government's fingers in agriculture, but you should not be blaming us for not passing a farm program. What the major farm organizations of America want, it seems to me, is that we have to have a farm program that meets this new economic environment. That is what freedom to farm is all about.

It seems we heard debate today, again from the other side of the aisle, about sometimes not enough money being in agriculture because the Balanced Budget Act of 1995 would have taken \$13 billion out of the baseline.

Then the next time, we are being admonished that we have a program that is going to let farmers receive some payments when prices are high. We present a farm bill that has \$6 billion for the year we are in when the program that we accepted from the other side of the aisle would not have any payments this year in the sense that it would be done away with as a result of farmers paying back last year's deficiency payment.

With the certainty of \$43 billion over the next 7 years, we have a chance in those parts of rural America where they did not have a good crop last year to benefit from the higher prices of grain this year, but yet they would be caught with writing a check back to the Federal Government for the advance deficiency payment that they got last year.

Our program would solve that. It would have a \$6 billion investment in agriculture, it seems to me just exactly what we are hearing the other side of the aisle cry about that our farm program was taking \$13 billion out of the baseline.

I hope that we can reach an agreement. The way things developed today, when you have a situation where the Democratic and Republican leaders get together and we on this side of the aisle buy everything that the Democratic leader asked for, and it looks like we have a bipartisan agreement put together, and then the other side cannot even go with a sweetheart deal that we accept—as I said once before on the Lugar-Leahy bill, there were 10 or 12 items that they put on a sheet of

paper that they wanted, and we just accepted them. Yet, in the caucus for the other side, they cannot agree to move forward tonight. And when they come out of that caucus, then they come to the floor and blame us when we had 53 votes, a majority vote to pass a bill, they blame us?

That is what I mean when I say I think it takes a lot of gall when we take almost everything they want, I guess, in these two instances, everything they ask for, and then eventually we cannot move forward.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

CONSTRUCTING A COMPROMISE FARM PROGRAM

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, Ogden Nash wrote a little four line poem about a man who was a drunk and a spouse of his who nagged him about it all the time. I am reminded of that listening to what I have listened to in the last hour or so.

He drinks because she scolds, he thinks.

She scolds because he drinks, she thinks.
And neither will admit what is really true.
He's a drunk and she's a shrew.

I listened today to discussions about who is at fault for failure. I listened to creative inventive discussions in which any one of several people choose to say that "It's her fault," or "his fault" or "their fault."

It is of little use or value, it seems to me, to worry about anything other than how we construct a compromise farm program.

There is a wide range of agreement in this Chamber about a farm program. There ought to be total planting flexibility for farmers. Any new farm program should provide for total planting flexibility on base acres. There is wide agreement on that.

Most of us agree that there ought to be forgiveness of advance deficiency payments for those who suffered crop losses last year. Most of us would agree to some kind of advance deficiency payment that would not have to be repayable in the next year or two. I would have no objection to that.

I would not be pleased with providing payments for people who do not farm. If the requirement for getting a payment is simply to have some land and a bank account, but you do not have to plant a seed and you still get a generous payment, that is wrong. I have some trouble with that. But I have no problem at all with providing some kind of advance or certain payments for farmers in order to recapitalize their farm operation.

My hope had been this evening that we would proceed during this period to have constructed some kind of a compromise. The reason that we are not proceeding late tonight or tomorrow or Saturday or Sunday or Monday I assume has a lot to do with what a lot of people are doing around the country.

There is a Presidential campaign going on. We have the equivalent of a football team in the U.S. Senate running for the Presidency. They are off around the country campaigning. I understand all that.

I have to tell you, I have enormous respect for the majority leader. I think the majority leader in this Chamber is a remarkable legislator, someone for whom I have had deep respect for many, many years. I had hoped, and I think the minority leader had hoped, and others had hoped, that there would be some method found by which we could reach a compromise. The talks that have been ongoing for the last number of hours have appeared to me to reach some significant agreement.

Will that agreement mean that next Tuesday there will be a compromise? I do not know the answer to that, but I sure hope there will be a compromise, because there is plenty of area for agreement between the aisles.

There is one area in which there is wide disagreement, and it seems to me it is the reason that we have not had a farm program to this point. The freedom to farm bill presupposes that there will be no further farm program. I know some of the supporters say, "No, that's not what we are trying to do." Others are more candid and up front and say, "Sure, that is what we are doing. We will have a buy-out up front with transition payments and we will transition you, and once you are transitioned, there will not be a safety net in the event that prices collapse."

My concern with that is I do not think we will have family farmers in our country if, when prices collapse—and there are plenty of reasons for grain prices to collapse from time to time—there is then not some kind of basic safety net.

The interesting thing about the farmers is they face a so-called free market with a lot of enemies in that free market. They have a big grain trade that would love to knock down prices at every opportunity. They would love to knock down prices the minute prices start to strengthen, and they do it in dozens of different ways. When farmers try to market, they have to market up the narrow neck of a bottle with about a dozen major grain trading firms controlling where that market stream of product goes.

The fact is, they want to buy grain at lower prices, not higher prices, and in dozens of ways, they try to find a way to knock down higher prices when prices firm up.

Do you think millers love to see high prices? No; no, they would like to find a way to knock down prices a bit. Food processors, do they like high grain prices? No, they find a way to knock them down. So every time prices start to firm up—and, yes, even USDA.

I heard an Assistant Secretary about 5 or 6 years ago sidle up to the table in the House Agriculture Committee and say, "We had to take action to release grain, because we thought prices were

firming up too much." That is a euphemism for saying, "We over in USDA thought farm prices were getting too high, so we used our leverage and the mechanisms we have to try to trim them down a bit."

The interesting thing is, family farmers never seem to be able to take advantage on any continuing basis of a free market of higher prices, because there is always someone in there to interrupt those higher prices, big grain trading firms, food processors and others. Well, I do not object—in fact I think we must find a much more market-oriented, market-sensitive farm program. Those who say we should are absolutely correct and they will find support from me for that. But I do not believe that we ought to decide that there should be no further price supports in the outyears in order that when international prices drop, family farmers will be left with no ability to deal with that risk.

Frankly, they cannot deal with that risk. Family farmers will not survive. Prices will drop and family farmers will fail and FAPRI, the research agency, says wheat prices will drop to \$3.22 next year. USDA predicts a drop in 1998. I do not know the facts. I know wheat prices go up and down. But they go down a lot easier than they go up.

When they go down, the question is, for somebody farming 800 acres of wheat land in the northern great plains, and wheat drops to \$3 a bushel and their production costs are \$4.50 a bushel, and there is no loan rate, no target price, no marketing loan, no restitution payment, no nothing, what happens to that family farm?

The family farm goes broke. Who farms it? An agrifactory buys it. Corporations farm in this country from California to Maine. That is what will happen if you decide this country has no interest in retaining a safety net for family farms.

Every time I hear somebody—especially somebody from Washington with a white shirt—talking about transitioning somebody—especially a farmer—I suggest you fasten the seat-belt on the tractor seat. If you are going to be transitioned, you better look at what is behind that so-called transition. It may be going to a marketing policy that says:

Let us have a buyout and make some big payments up front in exchange for no further help, even some minimum safety net in the long-term.

There does need to be a farm program enacted by the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House, and it needs to be done soon. I do not want to revisit the question of who did what and why. I can make a strong case that this is the first day of the 104th Congress we have had a debate on the farm bill on the floor of the Senate. I know one was put in the reconciliation bill, but it was not debated on the floor. I am not interested in revisiting that because it is not very important.

What is important is the question of what do we do now, how quickly can we

do it, and can we do it in a way that advantages the rural economies in this country. Can we do it in a way that especially tries to provide basic help to family-size farmers when prices drop.

It is my expectation and my hope that, with the leadership of Senator DOLE and Senator DASCHLE, and the work that has been ongoing today, in which I think there has been some fair amount of agreement, between now and next Tuesday, provide a proposal. We could provide to both caucuses an approach that provides a bridge, or deals with filling in the gaps between the divergent proposals, and come to the floor and truly, in a bipartisan way, join hands and say this makes sense and meets the test.

This does what some in this Chamber have counseled, which is to make a more market-oriented farm program work. It provides more flexibility and it moves into the future with a more modernistic program that is more market-sensitive. It still retains, for those concerned about whether we will have family farmers in the future, a basic safety net of some consequence, so that when prices drop, family farmers will be able to ride out those times.

I come from a town of 300 people and from an area that is a family farming area. I suppose some people can say, "Of what importance is it whether our farms are farmed by family farmers or whether they are farmed by one large giant corporation that farms two counties at a time?"

I think there is plenty of reason for us to believe, for both social and economic reasons, in the retention of the opportunity to farm, and that to have a network of family farms dotting these prairies in America, dotting the northern great plains, makes a lot of sense. It supports a lifestyle that I think is admired by a lot of Americans. Turn on the news in any major city in the country and ask yourself if what you hear there compares well with what you understand is going on in our small towns and out on our farms.

Does the news compare in terms of family values and good living, living in circumstances relatively free from crime, living in neighborhoods and farm areas where you know all of your neighbors. The fact is that there are a lot of reasons to care about whether we have a network of family farms in our future. The answer to that question depends on what kind of farm program we develop here in the U.S. Congress.

Mr. President, let me conclude by saying that it is not my intention to do anything other than suggest that all of us find a way to serve the common interests that we have in rural America. There are farm families who depend on us, and they depend on us to do the right thing. There are mixed messages coming from different groups, commodity groups and farm organizations. Some like this approach and some like that approach. It seems to me that there is a basis for compromise.

I hope that between now and next Tuesday, we will reach out and find

that basis and, on Tuesday, move to a conference committee, a piece of farm legislation passed by the U.S. Senate in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I just say, in answer to the Senator from North Dakota, I feel confident that Senators on both sides of the aisle want to reach an agreement on a substantial, constructive farm bill. Nothing is more important, and it is prime legislation. I feel sure that I can speak on behalf of Senators on my side of the aisle that would say we are going to reach that agreement, and we will all work together in good faith to achieve what is very important, coming from a farm State, as I do myself.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

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

NATIONAL APPRECIATION WEEK FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, during this National Appreciation Week for Catholic Schools I would like to take a few moments to recognize the high quality and the hard work of the Catholic School System.

Our thanks and praise should go to the Catholic Schools for their special efforts to put children first. In the midst of increased school drop-outs, illiteracy, teenage pregnancy, drug-abuse, youth violence and growing pressures on teenagers and children—Catholic Schools provide their students a safe and healthy environment for learning. These schools give pupils an advantage by helping them develop a solid moral foundation.

In today's challenging society, mere words and good intentions are not enough. Catholic Schools' actions demonstrate their commitment to children. With a 99.98 percent graduation rate and 85 percent college matriculation rate, South Dakota Catholic Schools are proving that a solid combination of educational and spiritual guidance is the key to healthy living. In assisting pupils to build better lives, Catholic Schools reaffirm the value of life.

Catholic Schools extend the lessons we try to teach children at home: respect and love of our fellow neighbors, respect of the individual, personal discipline, individual responsibility and concern for the larger community. Catholic schools reinforce these family values which are the key to strong communities. We want the best for our families, our communities, and South Dakota. We must work to put the best tools in the hands of the future—our children. The Catholic schools give stu-

dents the tools to be responsible adults and concerned citizens.

I want to thank all the individuals who have contributed to Catholic School Systems' continued success and growth—the teachers, administrators, and of course the parents, many being graduates of Catholic schools themselves. One special week each year is a modest way to pay special tribute and thanks to the Catholic Schools across our country for the service they provide to our communities and our future.

GOOD THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN MALTA, MONTANA

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, at a time when we hear so much about what is wrong with America, I want to take a moment to talk about a place where good things are happening. That place is Malta, Montana.

Malta is a small community in Northern Montana, up along what we in Montana call the "Hi-Line". Like any small Montana town, it is a place where people work hard and don't think twice about helping out a neighbor or a friend in need.

This past Christmas Eve, a fire destroyed Malta's high school and junior high school. But folks in Malta pitched right in to get a temporary school up and running.

Students, teachers, and others from the community have spent the past month salvaging lost items and fixing up temporary school sites. Almost every Montana community has helped by sending items to start up the new schools. Also, Federal and State Agencies, Veterans groups, private as well as small businesses and many other organizations have contributed to this effort.

And I was privileged to spend a day working as part of this effort. While the entire community deserves credit, I would like to recognize three individuals who have taken a leading role in this undertaking. First, I would like to acknowledge the Principal of Malta High, Marty Tyler, who quickly took control of the situation and led the students and the community in the effort to rebuild the schools. For example, Principal Tyler and members of the student council collected about 4,000 bricks to construct an entrance sign when the new school is built. During my work day at the Malta schools I participated in building windbreaks in front of doors and collecting bricks with Schoolboard Chairman Doug Ost and School Superintendent Bill Parker. Both of whom deserve a big thanks for the commitment and support they have given to the Malta School District.

Finally, this fire also prompted the creation of PRIDE, People Rebuilding Investing and Developing Education, a local group to offer advice and manpower to the school district. I would like to extend my sincere thanks for their community involvement.

Mr. President, it is an honor and a privilege for me to recognize the

achievements of the students, teachers, administrators, and citizens of the Malta community and all others who have helped to get this project off to a great start.

A STRONG NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, over the last month I've traveled to every county in South Carolina. And one of the things that I heard from people was that they want America to keep a strong National Guard.

As a veteran, I know that a strong National Guard is vital to national security. Time and again, National Guard troops proved themselves to be as competent—if not more so—as regular troops in the active military. Air National Guard troops from South Carolina routinely are rated among the best in the service. They flew countless missions in the Persian Gulf War and flew them with skill, accuracy and expertise. Army National Guard troops from South Carolina proved themselves to be ready to mobilize and fight almost at the drop of a hat.

Mr. President, a strong National Guard also makes common sense. In these days where dollars are stretched thin, we can get three qualified and highly trained guardsmen for the cost of one active-duty soldier. Perhaps more importantly, however, having a strong Guard builds community support for the military. Think about it—the men and women who serve in the National Guard work in towns and counties every day across the country. They work in stores, construction sites, mills, factories and offices. And they set the example of public service for everyone. When their units are called up, their co-workers all turn out to support their efforts.

Mr. President, a couple of weeks ago when I was in Laurens, South Carolina, Rich Browne, the local newspaper editor, and I discussed the value of a strong Guard. His comments in a recent column are to-the-point. I hope every Senator would read this wise column and resist efforts to reduce the size of our National Guard units.

Mr. President, I ask that Rich Browne's column from the January 4 edition of the Laurens County Advertiser be reprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The column follows:

AVOIDING MILITARY ADVENTURES

[From the Laurens County Advertiser by Rich Browne]

This should be an interesting year for the U.S. military.

With the active duty services once again calling on reserves to support the efforts to police the peace in Bosnia, according to news reports, the Department of Defense once again is leading a charge to reduce the role of National Guard units in preparing for the defense of the nation.

Well, the truth be known, the Department of the Army would like for all the combat arms units in the National Guard to just go away—they are a threat to the active Army's jobs. I saw this first-hand in Desert Storm