Shevlin, Thomas, New York.
Studdert, Michael, Utah.

DEMOCRATS

Eschenbacher, Christian, Montana.
Graff, Garrett, Vermont.
Knowles, James, Oregon.
Koontz, Megan, Iowa.
Larson, Tiffany, South Dakota.
Lichtblau, Daniel, New York.
Miller, Anne, Massachusetts.
Raizada, Avinash, Michigan.
Soriano, Jennifer, Hawaii.
Towns, Rachel, Wisconsin.
Wiese, Dayton, South Dakota.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, Senators may be intrigued to learn that during the 74 days Congress was in recess, the federal debt increased by more than $57 billion.

To be exact, the increase (from November 13, 1997 to January 26, 1998) totaled $57,033,087,681.31 (Fifty-seven billion, thirty-three million, eighty-seven thousand, six hundred eighty-one dollars and thirty-one cents).

This increase is a blunt reminder that even when Congress takes a break, the federal debt does not. The federal debt will continue to soar unless and until Congress changes the status quo. Presently, each citizen's share of the national debt is $20,424.89.

Mr. President, with this in mind, let me begin where we left off:

At the close of business yesterday, Monday, January 26, 1998, the federal debt stood at $5,487,280,357,810.54 (Five trillion, four hundred eighty-seven billion, two hundred eighty million, three hundred fifty-seven thousand, eight hundred ten dollars and fifty-four cents).

Five years ago, January 26, 1993, the federal debt stood at $4,171,138,000,000 (four trillion, one hundred seventy-one billion, one hundred thirty-eight million).

Ten years ago, January 26, 1998, the federal debt stood at $2,448,079,000,000 (Two trillion, four hundred forty-eight billion, seventy-nine million).

Fifteen years ago, January 26, 1983, the federal debt stood at $1,196,856,000,000 (One trillion, one hundred ninety-six billion, eight hundred fifty-six million).

Twenty-five years ago, January 26, 1973, the federal debt stood at $449,476,000,000 (Four hundred forty-nine billion, four hundred seventy-six million) which reflects a debt increase of over $5 trillion—$5,037,804,357,810.54 (Five trillion, thirty-seven billion, eight hundred four million, three hundred fifty-seven thousand, eight hundred ten dollars and fifty-four cents) during the past 25 years.

Mr. DORGAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, we are in morning business and allowed to speak for 10 minutes; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

SECOND SESSION OF THE 105TH CONGRESS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, as we begin a new year in the U.S. Congress, the second session of this Congress, I look forward with anticipation to a number of issues we must address. I hope we can do that in a bipartisan way, and I hope we will not be distracted by a lot of other things that come up during the year and that we will actually accomplish some good things for the country.

I recognize that outside this Chamber there is now a scandal that exists in this country. We will undoubtedly learn the facts about the allegations that have been made, and the American people will make a judgment based upon those facts. That is the way it should be. To make judgments about allegations and about rumors and about planted stories, and so on, before the facts are known is not a proper way to deal with them.

But notwithstanding what is happening outside this Chamber, we have responsibilities here. I was interested to learn that in the first hour and a half of this second session, we had people come to the Chamber of the Senate, once again, and tell us about how our country works and what is wrong with our country. It was interesting to me that the Chamber lights had hardly become warm when we had Members come to the floor to, once again, talk about who the big spenders are. ''Oh, the big spenders on this side'' and ''the big spenders on''—it is interesting that nothing ever changes.

I watched the American music awards show on television last night. I thought to myself as I listened to a bit of this this morning that, had this discussion taken place yesterday, we could have entered some of this dialog for best rap artist or best presentation in rap music. It certainly is a rap. There is no tune there, but they never miss a lyric. It is that this side represents the big spenders.

I just want to begin for a moment today to talk about where we are and how we got here and what our need is this year to address critical issues for this country.

First of all, where are we? We are in a country that is blessed with a very strong economy. Things are going well in this country. Unemployment is down. Welfare is down. Crime is down. Inflation is down. Economic growth is up. More people are working. Things are better in this country.

I heard not too many minutes ago someone say, ''But none of that has anything to do with Congress; it has to do with a good economy.'' I remind Members of Congress that in 1993, this President and this Congress decided to take a tough vote. Are we going to put this country back on track? Are we going to tell the American people that we are serious about wrestling this crippling budget deficit to the ground? Are we going to cast a hard vote, an unpopular vote, a tough vote? The answer was yes. We did, by one vote in the U.S. Senate and one vote in the U.S. House of Representatives, cut spending. Yes, we increased some taxes, and we said to the American people we are serious about getting this country's fiscal house in order. We are going to wrestle that Federal deficit to the ground. And the fact is, it gave the American people confidence. They said, ''These folks are serious; they understand this is a serious problem for this country and they are willing to make tough votes.''

I went home to my State and said, ''I voted yes. I voted yes because I believe it is the best thing for this country to send a signal to the markets, the American citizens and everyone in this world that this country cares about these issues and we intend, this President intends and this Congress intends, to get our fiscal house in order.'' And by one vote we passed a plan in 1993 that set this economy off into a universe of economic growth and economic opportunity—by one vote.

This economy rests on people's confidence. If people are confident about the future, they do things that reflect that confidence: They buy cars; they buy houses; they invest; they do things that reflect their confidence about the future. If they are not confident, they make different decisions. Based on people's confidence or lack of it, this economy moves forward or lurches backward.

My point is, for someone to say this is all accidental is to ignore history. This is not accidental. This President deserves some credit for a fiscal policy that was tough and no nonsense and said we care about wrestling this Federal budget deficit to the ground. And this Congress, those of us in it who voted yes on that, participated in it.

I might add, while people are pointing across aisles, as I heard earlier, about big spending in the Congress, we did not even get one vote by accident from the other side of the aisle for a fiscal policy that says we are going to solve this deficit problem.

We come to today with a good economy and, I think, some good news ahead of us. I hope all of us, reaching across the aisle, can decide we have a common agenda. When people sit around their homes in the evening and have supper together and talk about their lives, what do they talk about? They talk about these things: Are our kids going to a good school, getting a good education? Do we have a good job or opportunity for a decent job that pays well with decent benefits? Do our children or grandparents have an opportunity for health care that is good? Can they afford it? Are our streets safe, our neighborhoods safe? Is the air clean, the water we drink safe, the food we eat safe? What about our roads? In what condition are our roads and bridges? And what about family farms and those who produce our food? Those are the issues that people care about and want us to do something about.

Let me tick off about four areas that we have to grapple with quickly. We just heard two discussions a moment ago about surplus. One said we are not spending enough money; we need to spend more on defense. The second one said it is the other folks over here on this side of the aisle who are the big spenders, and so forth, and talked about the surplus. There is no surplus.

The only basis on which anyone can claim they balanced the budget is to take nearly $100 billion out of Social Security trust funds and use it over in the budget to claim there is a surplus. There is no surplus, and no one in this room ought to be persuaded to spend the surplus that doesn't exist. To the extent we will have a surplus after we have made whole the Social Security funds and used those trust funds for the purpose for which they were intended, when we get to that point, and only when we get to that point, will we have a surplus. And when we do, I think at least a part of that surplus ought to be used to pay down just a part of the Federal debt. In good times, you ought to be able to reduce indebtedness. But no one ought to rush around talking about a surplus that doesn't exist.

I believe that President Clinton will call tonight to use the accumulated revenues that come from a better economy to make good on those trust fund bonds, and that is exactly what we ought to do. No one ought to claim a surplus as long as those who are using those trust funds are using them as operating revenues.

Let me tell the Presiding Officer that, if you look at the Congressional Budget Office, which puts out byzantine reports, their most recent report shows that if a budget which they claim is in balance at some point—next year, I guess—they claim that the debt won't continue to grow. Why will they claim that? Because they don't include all the debt. I have just written them a letter saying you can't give us half-answers and half-truths. The answer is, when they claim the budget is in balance, the Federal debt will continue to increase, which is prima facie evidence that this notion of a budget being in balance when you are misusing Social Security trust funds is a fraud.

Campaign finance reform. We must address it and do it quickly. We had a little house race in New York State. In the middle of that race for one house seat in New York State, $800,000 of out-of-State money came in under the notion of express issue advocacy, brought in against a candidate—I understand that was not money accountable to anybody; it could be soft money, corporate money—brought in precisely to defeat a congressional candidate, but essentially laundered through a system that now permits that kind of laundering so that no one in that district will ever know whose money it was. Is it unlimited corporate money that goes into this system and then is washed up through some congressional district someplace to defeat a specific candidate and, therefore, it is not accountable? It is polluting the political system. It is wrong, and anyone in this Chamber who stands up and defends that, in my judgment, doesn't understand what the Founding Fathers decided about this political system of ours.

That ought not be the case, and we ought to take steps to change it. We are going to push and push in this Chamber to get a vote on these issues and get campaign finance reform done. Some will continue to filibuster. They have a right to filibuster, but the American people have a right to expect us to clean up this mess, and the sooner the better.

Health care. We ought to deal with health care. We ought to do that soon. I read in the New York Times about a woman who had fallen in an accident. Her brain was swelling. She was in an ambulance being rushed to the hospital. She had the presence of mind to say to the ambulance drivers, ''I don't want to go to the nearest hospital,'' and she named it by name. ''I want to be taken to a hospital farther away.'' This is a woman with a brain injury, in the back of an ambulance, speeding down the street. She said that because she knew by reputation that when you are wheeled into that nearest hospital, your health is a matter of their bottom line—dollars and cents. She said, ''I want to go to a hospital where I am wheeled into an emergency room where they are not going to look at me with respect to dollars and cents.''

Managed care. What does it mean to quality of care all across this country? We ought to address that. Do patients have rights? If so, what are the rights? Do they have a right to find out from their doctors in this country what the treatment options are? If not, why not? Who is withholding that information from patients and why? Which patient doesn't get it? Is it some function of a bottom line in some company that is making money off health care? Is it some 24-year-old accountant in some office 200 miles away that is telling a doctor what kind of health care that doctor can perform on that patient and what the doctor can tell that patient about the patient's options? This Congress has a right and a responsibility to deal with those health care issues, and we ought to do it soon in this session.

Mr. President, the issue of education is also critically important. There isn't a country that shortchanges education and remains a strong world-class power. Thomas Jefferson, at the start of this system, said anyone who believes this country can be ignorant and free believes in something that never was and never will be.

We can do things to improve education in the country, but I am not one who believes it is bankrupt. How did we get to where we are? Does anyone want to leave this country to find better health care somewhere else? Do you know anybody who wants to go to a world-class university who looks overseas? Most of them are here in this country.

I am not one who says it is a bankrupt system, but we can improve it. We ought to get reports on our schools. We get reports about our kids. As parents and taxpayers, we deserve a report card about how our schools are doing in educating our kids.

Finally, Mr. President, we need to deal with the highway bill, and we need to do that quickly. On our agenda, we ought to decide tomorrow the highway bill ought to be brought to the floor of the Senate. We were supposed to have done it last year and didn't. And we were told now it will be the first item on the agenda this year.

I am told it may wait until the budget bill. I appeared on a television program this morning with the chairman of the relevant committee in the House of Representatives. He says, well, he is ready to bring up the bill in the House, but he has an agreement with the Speaker not to bring it up until the budget bill. That means 2, 3, or 4 months from now. That cannot happen.

We cannot wait 3 or 4 months for a highway bill that was supposed to have been passed last year. You do that and you have contractors in States that cannot do bid lettings, you have people being laid off of projects where the project should go forward to build and repair roads and bridges. So we cannot do that.

We need to expect, in the next day or two, that the majority leader will do what he told us he would do; that is, bring the highway bill to the floor of the Senate. Let us debate it and let us move it out.

Oh, they are worried about an amendment that is going to be offered to it. I understand that. But, you know, you can worry about amendments forever. Bring the bill to the floor, let us have a vote on the amendments and send the bill to conference—and let us put some pressure on the Speaker to do the same on the House side—and get a highway bill out so the American people can have some certainty about what kind of investment we are going to make in bridges and roads and repairs and the building of that infrastructure.

People pay taxes. It goes into a trust fund to do it. And I think they should be able to expect that we are going to do what is necessary.

Finally, Mr. President—and I know the Senator from Minnesota is waiting to speak so I will finish—I want to say, in the midst of all that is happening in this country now, there are some who perhaps get discouraged about this process of ours. And I understand why that can be the case. It is an unusual process.

A free and open democratic society is in some cases a society that does not look good from time to time. And yet, if you look at our system through a couple hundred years of very successful democracy, you see as democracies

pass through angst and anxiety and pain and suffering and all the other things, it tends to make an open and democratic society make tough, thoughtful decisions about its future.

We have abolished slavery. We have survived depressions. We have defeated Hitler. We have cured polio. We have sent people to the Moon. I mean, we can talk a lot about what this country has endured and what this country has done.

My only point is, I do not think any of us ought to at this point in time be discouraged about democracy and about Congress and about our Government and about the press and about all the institutions in our lives. It is a good place to be. I do not know of anybody who wants to go elsewhere. I do not know of anybody who wants to exchange it for some other location in the world.

We should not be discouraged. Our job, it seems to me, is to do our work for the American people. And there is plenty of work to do. I have mentioned some—education, health care, finish the job on fiscal policy, deal with highways, deal with campaign finance reform, and more. And that is just a start.

I am here and I am ready, and I hope my colleagues feel the same. We ought to join hands and say there are things that Democrats and Republicans believe in and can do together. And we will be persuaded to do that if we can just turn off the rap music, turn off the rap that one side is all wrong and the other side is all right, one side is big spenders and the other side is not.

I finally say this. I do not think there is a plugged nickel's worth of difference between the two aisles in the U.S. Senate—Republicans and Democrats—in terms of how much they want to spend. Is there a difference on what they want to spend money for? Absolutely. But I will guarantee you, for everybody who stands up on one side of the aisle wanting to spend money on one program, there is somebody on the other side standing there saying, ''No. I want it spent on my priorities.'' What we need to do is join together and, through this process, find the right priorities for this country's future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended for 10 minutes.

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

The Senator is recognized to speak for 10 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I thank the Chair.

ARTICLE BY ROBERT REICH

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article in this past Sunday's New York Times magazine, ''When Naptime Is Over, The placid public mood is an illusion. Real Issues rumble beneath the calm and could soon send a wake-up call,'' by Robert Reich, former Secretary of Labor, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows;

[From the New York Times Magazine, Jan. 25, 1998]

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO POLITICS?

(By Robert B. Reich)

There's no longer any political news, a reporter friend confided recently, explaining why ''human interest'' stories were oozing like syrup across his newspaper's front pages. We're in the Bland Decade now, a time when citizens march on Washington not to affect politics but to vow they'll be better people and when politicians speak out mainly to urge niceness: volunteer your time, enter into dialogues on race, hire someone off welfare, please. Apparently we need little more than charity, moral uplift and perhaps a modest program or two. Politics is dead, or so it seems.

The easiest explanation for this torpor is that the nation is fat, like an overstuffed bear starting hibernation. It's no longer the economy, stupid. Six years ago, a prolonged recession hurt white-collar workers, giving some urgency to the politics of ''change.'' Prosperity, though, is a powerful sedative. Forget politics for now, we seem to be saying. Let's compare stock portfolios, banter about culture and identity and tut-tut over problems decades hence, like an insolvent Social Security trust fund or excessive greenhouse gases.

The great economic contests have been won. Communism vanished before it was even vanquished. The Japanese competitive threat is now a sorry heap of bad debt. European welfare states heave under double-digit unemployment. And here in the land of plenty we've never had it so good. Wealth is exploding, unemployment is at a 24-year low, inflation is quiescent (the Federal Reserve Board chairman, Alan Greenspan, publicly raised concerns about *deflation*), the stock market is riding high. American capitalism is the envy of the world.

But look more closely and the easy explanation falls short. Most Americans don't have it so good. They have jobs, but most wages and benefits are stuck or continue to drop. Wealth has exploded at the top, but the wages of people in the bottom half are lower today in terms of purchasing power than they were in 1989, before the last recession. This is in sharp contrast to every previous recovery in the postwar period. Corporate downsizing and mass layoffs are still the order of the day, which partly explains why so few workers demand raises in this tight labor market. They'd rather keep their jobs.

The reality is that Wall Street's advance hasn't been widely shared. The richest 1 percent hold more than 35 percent of the nation's wealth. The typical middle-class family has no more than $7,000 in stocks and $12,500 in mutual funds, according to a 1995 survey by the Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department. Even the recent market surge isn't likely to have changed this very much, given what has happened to wages.

Whatever savings Americans do have are imperiled by hospital bills. A growing portion of the public lacks health insurance—in 1989, 33 million Americans under age 65 were without it; by 1996, 41.3 million. (The President's proposal to extend Medicare coverage to early retirees and displaced workers as young as 55, which would be the largest expansion in 25 years, is expected to add only 300,000 to the rolls.)

Despite the boom, inequality has widened. The nation's poverty rate is slightly higher than it was before the last recession. In 1989, 12.6 million, or 19.6 percent, of the nation's children lived in poverty; now it's 14.5 million, or 20.5 percent. The Conference of Mayors reports rising demand for food and shelter among the homeless. And the successes of the civil rights movement notwithstanding, today's urban schools are more racially segregated than in the 1980's.

So why, then, the prevailing political somnolence? Traditional politics has been all about who's gaining and who's losing. Yet it has lately become unfashionable, indeed in poor taste, to notice such things. In the present upbeat climate, downbeat data are slightly subversive. It is necessary to minimize all worry about the economy lest the public lose confidence, a perfect tautology. Bankers and business leaders have become cheerleaders in the nationwide pep rally. Onward! Upward!

Recent polls show, accordingly, high rates of consumer confidence. A record 40 percent of consumers queried in the Conference Board's December survey called jobs ''plentiful,'' although, tellingly, only 28 percent expected their own wages to rise. These are the ones who have heard the distant roar of surging wealth and assume that the rising tide will lift them, too—which may explain the record level of consumer debt. Personal bankruptcies are also at a record high.

Will politics revive when the economic tide ebbs and hardships appear like shipwrecks on the tidal flats? Not necessarily. Even in 1992, with the nation mired in recession, political engagement was grudging. Americans wanted ''change'' to get the economy moving again. But there was no sense of moral urgency. It was simply time to replace old management with new. Most Americans had long before stopped believing in government as a force for much good in their lives.

Some people will say we don't need a vital politics to be a vital society. We can expand the circle of prosperity through grass-roots moral activism, spearheaded by community groups, socially responsible businesses, not-for-profits, religious organizations and compassionate individuals—perhaps all deftly linked by fax and modem, a ''virtual'' social movement. Commentators rightly stress the importance of such civic engagement. But they make a serious mistake labeling it as an alternative to politics. Throughout our history, civic activism has been the precursor, and the propellant, of political movements.

Almost a century ago, American politics appeared similarly listless despite growing social problems. As today, the economy was booming, jobs were plentiful and vast fortunes were being accumulated. Yet real wages had stopped growing, and the gulf between rich and poor was widening into a chasm. New technologies (steam engines, railway locomotives, the telephones, steam turbines, electricity) were transforming the nation, pulling families off the farms and immigrants from aboard and depositing many into fetid slums. Wall Street magnates were consolidating their empires. Government was effectively bought by large corporations, and the broad public was deeply cynical. William McKinley won re-election—legened has it, on a pledge to ''stand pat''—and as the century closed, the nation seemed politically comatose.

Within three years, however, there was an outburst of reform: muckrakers like Lincoln