

went beyond September 30 into October or November.

Candidly, it was difficult to get the Republican caucus to agree to \$106 billion in the Senate and in the House, but we did that. But in presenting the bill, the conference report, we had some priorities which were somewhat different from those of the President. We had, for example, added \$2.7 billion for the National Institutes of Health because we thought that was a very high priority item. We had also made some changes on the \$2.7 billion which the President had requested for school construction and additional teachers, giving him that money but adding a provision that if the local boards of education wanted to use the money for something else after fulfilling very stringent requirements, that they could use it for local control.

When we sat down to negotiate with the White House, the President and the Democrats in the House upped the ante and asked for an additional \$6 billion. From my way of thinking, that was totally unacceptable because we had provided the \$106 billion which the President had initially requested. After all, it is the congressional prerogative to set the priorities on appropriations. That is spelled out in the Constitution. The President has to sign the bill but we have the lion's share of responsibility, in my view, to establish the priorities.

Those negotiations degenerated—at least in my opinion—until there was an inclination by some in the conference to pay \$114 billion. I refused to be a party to that amount of money because I had fought hard to raise the figure to \$106 billion and I felt there would be no credibility in what I would present as chairman of the subcommittee if I would be a will-o'-the-wisp and raise it to any figure to satisfy the demands of the White House and the House Democrats. There was a tentative agreement of \$114 billion and I declined to sign any conference report which reflected that figure.

Ultimately that arrangement broke down. Now we have come to the point where the negotiations have produced a figure of \$108.9 billion, which is still more than the \$106 billion we had originally projected, but in the spirit of accommodation, trying to finish the business of the Congress, I am prepared to go along with that figure although very reluctantly.

There have been changes in the bill which I find totally unacceptable. The National Institutes of Health has had an increase of \$2.7 billion over fiscal year 2000, which had been in all along, now cut by \$200 million to \$2.5 billion. I believe that the National Institutes of Health is the crown jewel of the Federal Government. It may be the only jewel of the Federal Government. We have added almost \$9 billion to the funding on NIH in the last five cycles. The Senate, in one of the first years under my chairmanship, came in at the figure of a \$950 million increase. The

House would not go along. We compromised out at \$907 million. The next year we added \$1 billion; the year after, \$2 billion; the year after that, \$2.3 billion, which was cut a little on an across-the-board cut. This year we put in \$2.7 billion, now reduced to \$2.5 billion. But we have a total of almost \$9 billion added in these last five cycles and they have made tremendous strides on the most dreaded diseases—Parkinson's and Alzheimer's and cancer and heart ailments and the whole range.

It is my hope in the future that whoever chairs the subcommittee will have better cooperation on all sides to present the bill to the President before the fiscal year ends. I think, had that been done, we could have mustered a very strong position that our priorities were superior to what the President had in mind, and that if he were going to veto the bill, we ought not to be fearful of his veto but we ought to accept it as his view and then take the case to the American public. I think, had the bill been submitted to the President on September 5, we would have won that fight. Or if we had not won it outright, we would have compromised in terms so we wouldn't be here on December 15, still arguing about this Labor-HHS-Education bill as the principal source of contention.

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 3280 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I again thank my distinguished ranking member, Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER, who works collaboratively on veterans affairs matters and all members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. It is a committee which has worked in a bipartisan way. It has a very excellent staff, with staff director Bill Tuerk. I thank the staff for their assistance and commend to the public and the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the legislation which has been passed during the 106th Congress.

I know my time has expired, and I note the presence on the floor of a distinguished Senator, Ms. COLLINS. I yield the floor. I was about to say "another distinguished Senator," but I modified that to "a distinguished Senator."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before the Senator from Pennsylvania leaves the floor, if that is his intention, I thank him for the exceptional job he has done in ensuring that we do have funding increases for critical programs such as those at the National Institutes of Health.

I heard the Senator from Pennsylvania, the chairman of the subcommittee, describe it as the crown jewel of the Federal Government, and I totally agree with his comments. He has also been an advocate for more education funding, combined with more flexibility. I wish we had followed his

advice earlier this year and sent the appropriations bill down to the White House, completing his work in a very timely fashion back in July, I believe it was.

I commend the Senator for being an outstanding chairman. I am a great admirer of his and appreciate all of his hard work.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I express my thanks to Senator COLLINS. We work very closely together with a very distinguished group of Senators—Senator JEFFORDS, Senator SNOWE, and who is the fifth member? Yes, Senator CHAFEE, who is presiding. I thank the Chair and thank Senator COLLINS.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 1:30 p.m., with the time equally divided.

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

#### THE STEEP COST OF A MAINE WINTER

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the importance of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program known as LIHEAP in helping low-income Maine families cope with the high cost of our long Maine winters.

As Callie Parker from Little Deer Isle, Maine, so eloquently testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee earlier this year, heating your home during a Maine winter is a matter of life and death. When the cold reaches into the very marrow of one's bones, when a glass of water you left on a night stand freezes during the night should your furnace go out, you simply cannot get by without heat.

Unfortunately, not everyone has enough money to buy the fuel necessary to heat their home. Far too many Maine families have had to choose whether to buy groceries or to pay their rent or mortgage or to keep warm. These are choices that no one should be forced to make, but unless we increase funding for energy assistance now, these choices will become increasingly common.

Winter has not even officially begun, although you would not know that in the area of the country from which the Presiding Officer and I come. The high price of fuel and cold temperatures have already driven a record number of households in Maine to seek home heating assistance. Already the Community Action Program agencies in Maine have identified 28,000 households in need of LIHEAP funds to get through this winter. That compares to only 10,000 applicants at this time last year; in other words, it has more than doubled the amount of households seeking this kind of assistance. Another 19,000 families are waiting to be reviewed by the CAP agencies.