

we were without a surplus, was about 2 percent over the last couple years. With the surplus, it has been 6 to 8 percent.

Now I don't argue the fact that some of the spending is the kind of spending we want to make. I am persuaded—and I have seen this in my own State legislature and here certainly—when there is a surplus, the growth of government goes up substantially. It goes up almost uncontrollably. So I think the idea of doing the three or four basic things the President set out last night is substantially right. One is to provide the money for those things that are key priorities in our Government activities. Two is to pay off the national debt under the proposition that it would be paid off in 10 years—all that can be paid off under the economic circumstances. And then we will have a tax return to the people who have paid the dollars.

We are all interested, of course, in those issues, in those activities that are out there, such as education. I was home this weekend, and we talked a little about how we see our State, our communities, our public lands, and our families in Wyoming in 10, 15 years. Interestingly enough, the most common thing, actually, was education and the economy—jobs. Of course, we all want our kids to have the best education but there is quite a little interest in having job training and education. Everywhere you go, education is always there.

This proposal has the Education Department at an 11.5-percent increase—which is the most in a very long time—to go for young people in preschool and reading and those things.

Of course, Social Security is to be protected; \$1.6 trillion out of the surplus would be preserved there.

Medicare, of course, comes out of the 2.5 percent on top of the Social Security. It would be there for a priority for doing some things. Pharmaceuticals: That is going to be a difficult thing, but it is something we are all dedicated to doing.

Strengthening defense, of course. It is interesting. I have had a couple opportunities to go on bases. One is in my home State. It is a missile base, Warren Air Force Base. I asked: What are your highest priorities? First was housing, particularly enlisted and NCO housing. Some of it had been there 30, 40 years. I went down to Quantico, VA, where I served in the Marine Corps. The first priority was base housing.

In this budget is a substantial amount of money for pay and housing for the military and also for health care. Then we will properly take a look at the military in general, the strategic aspects of it and weapons aspects of it. Times have changed, and the whole challenge of the military has changed. We used to go in with five divisions and tanks and artillery. Now we are more likely to have to move about a group by air and ship, and they have to sustain themselves for weeks. It is a totally different kind of thing.

I think we have a great opportunity here to meet our obligations as the Federal Government, to meet our fairness obligations with the taxpayers and return the surplus to them, and to meet our obligations to young people by paying off the debt we have incurred.

I am excited about the opportunities. If you want to look down the road, what do you see? How do you see the Federal Government? How do you see our country in 15 years? These are the kinds of things that will be important to us—to strengthen the economy with an energy policy and do these kinds of things.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CARNAHAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate continue morning business until 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. BURNS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I now be recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

KEEPING PROMISES ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to give my first speech on the Senate floor, mindful of what a great privilege it is to stand here and also what a tremendous opportunity it is to be of service to others.

I am also mindful that I was elected last fall for special reasons. I made some very important promises to Minnesotans, promises that I intend to keep. Foremost among them was my promise to Minnesota senior citizens to help design and pass prescription drug coverage that would be available to everyone who is presently receiving Medicare.

Far too many times last year, I saw the suffering and the fear which our el-

derly were experiencing. I saw it in their weary faces, in their eyes filled with tears, and in their trembling hands. For them, the promises of Social Security and Medicare were unraveling, promises of retirement years with reliable economic security, free at least from the financial uncertainties and emergencies. But in their lives, higher and higher prescription drug prices destroyed their financial health and ravaged their emotional well-being.

So last spring I began my "Rx Express" bus trips to Canada. Borrowing this idea from others, I took busloads of Minnesota senior citizens to Canada where they could buy the same prescription medicines at far lower prices—often for half the cost in the United States, or less, for the same medicine, produced by exactly the same manufacturer.

I rode the first bus myself, leaving St. Cloud, MN, at 7 a.m. with 42 senior citizens and returning almost 18 hours later. This was no pleasure cruise. In fact, we spent the entire time crowded together on a compact bus, stopping only for customs, a Canadian doctor's office, a pharmacist, and for dinner. As we traveled those long hours, I was struck by the awful absurdity of our trip, because we in Minnesota pride ourselves on having world-class medical care facilities. In fact, people come from all over the world to Minnesota for the best possible health care—places such as the Mayo Clinic, the University of Minnesota Hospital, and Children's Hospital. Yet here we were, enduring a miserable travel marathon so that our senior citizens—the most elderly, frail, and vulnerable among us—could save precious dollars on the costs of their life-saving medicines.

Believe me, their cost savings were very substantial. We took a dozen of these bus trips to Canada last year, and the average savings per senior was \$350. One gentleman saved over \$1,400 on the cost of his U.S. drugs for the 6 months. Another woman said to me that her life had been saved twice—once when her medicine became available, and the second time when she could actually afford them.

I will continue the Rx Express buses by donating my Senate paychecks to the Minnesota Senior Federation or some other organization that will use my contributions to continue them. However, the solution to prescription drug affordability is not to bus every Minnesotan to Canada. Rather, it is to provide prescription drug coverage to every senior citizen across America.

When I was home last week, many elderly Minnesotans asked me, when will this kind of program become a reality? For them, the need is immediate and acute. So their need for us to act is immediate and acute. Unfortunately, today Congress shows little sign of reacting with urgency to this emergency. Last year, Members deadlocked over the form this coverage should take. Some favored adding prescription drug