

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members are recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE AMBASSADOR FROM BELIZE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell a story worthy of a Hollywood script.

In fact, if it was made into a movie, it would probably be called "the Strange Case of the Billionaire, the Loophole, the Ambassadorship, and a Country Called Belize."

For our purposes today, I just call it a window on the soul of the Gingrich revolution.

Mr. Speaker, our story begins in the small Nation of Belize.

You may have heard of Belize before.

It's a small Central-American nation known for its great vacations, its near-pristine tropical forests, and its great skindiving.

But recently, it made news for a different reason.

Last week, the Nation of Belize inquired about setting up a new diplomatic post in one of the most important cities in America.

Was it Washington, DC? New York City?

Nope. Belize wants to set up its diplomatic post in Sarasota, FL.

Now why, you may wonder, would they want to do that? It's not because Sarasota has an overly large concentration of Belizeans.

Well, it seems they would like to have a new ambassador to the United States.

A new ambassador by the name of Kenneth Dart.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you may have heard of Kenneth Dart before.

He's an American. At least he was an American.

Up until a year ago, he was a billionaire investor and styrofoam-cup maker living in America.

But last year, he renounced his American citizenship and moved to Belize.

Why did he do that?

Well, because under a provision in the U.S. Tax Code, by renouncing his citizenship, Mr. Dart could avoid paying his U.S. income taxes.

Tens of millions of dollars in U.S. income taxes.

So in exchange for becoming a billionaire Benedict Arnold, Mr. Dart got to keep millions of dollars.

Problem is, while taking his trip abroad, he's taking American taxpayers for a ride.

During the tax debate this year, Democrats offered a bill to close this loophole and force billionaires like Kenneth Dart to pay their fair share.

But when it came time for a vote, every Republican but six voted against it.

Instead, they voted to cut school lunches, student loans, and Medicare.

But now Mr. Dart has a new problem. Under U.S. law, he can only come back to America once every 30 days.

Problem is, his family still lives in America.

And I'll bet you'll never guess where his family lives.

That's right—Sarasota, FL.

So, as a new Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Dart will indeed be visiting the white house—the white house he and his family own in Sarasota, FL.

The kicker to all this, Mr. Speaker is simply this: Under the Republican tax plan, Mr. Dart's family in Florida is still eligible to receive huge tax breaks.

Huge tax breaks that are being paid for by Republican cuts to Medicare.

So next time you hear people talking about the Gingrich revolution, stop and think for a minute about the "Case of the Billionaire, the Loophole, the Ambassadorship, and a Country called Belize."

Because that's the real Gingrich revolution.

POTENTIAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. ALLARD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I would like to address the issue of a potential Government shutdown on October 1 and the appropriate funding level for any continuing resolution.

The American people sent a clear message in November that they would no longer allow the Federal Government to amass increasing amounts of debt at the expense of their children and their grandchildren. They voiced their frustration at the increasing size and scope of the Federal Government. And they expressed a great deal of impatience and frustration with what they saw as broken promises and a failure to change business as usual in Washington, DC.

It is my firm belief that the Republican party will stand or fall on our ability to deliver on our promises. The American people will reward us if we stand firm and deliver a balanced budget to them by 2002, and they will punish us if we fail.

I am proud of the progress that we have made thus far to achieve a balanced budget. The budget plan that we approved in June will put us on a glide-path to the first balanced budget since 1969. The appropriations bills that the House has passed are in compliance with the budget resolution and are strong bills which will help to make the Government more efficient and less intrusive.

But in spite of the impressive steps that we have taken to get our fiscal

house in order, much more remains to be done. Although the House has passed all but one appropriations bill, we have only passed one conference report. Much more disturbing is the veto threat which hangs over most of the funding bills.

Everyone has begun to realize that a continuing resolution will be necessary to keep parts of the Government from shutting down on October 1. It is unlikely that we will complete action on all of the appropriations bills by the end of the fiscal year.

What funding levels could be contained in a continuing resolution? There are several alternatives. Traditionally, a continuing resolution assumes the lowest of the current year's level, the new House-approved level, or the new Senate-approved level. This has been known as the Michel rule. But Congress can specify any funding level and any mix.

My fear is that unless we clarify the rules governing a continuing resolution, funding at 1995 levels will become the most attractive and least painful option for those who wish to preserve the status quo and block budget cuts.

History has shown instances in which segments of the Government were funded by continuing resolutions for a significant part of the year because of fundamental disagreements between Congress and the White House. Indeed, each year of the Reagan administration, at least one segment of the Federal Government was funded by a continuing resolution for the whole fiscal year.

We must make a continuing resolution an unpleasant alternative that will act as a catalyst for achieving our budgetary goals. Under no circumstances must a continuing resolution present proponents of the status quo with an easy way out.

In August, I introduced H.R. 2197, the Allard continuing resolution reform act. The Allard rule specifically amends the Rules of the House to require that if an appropriation has not been enacted by October 1, then a continuing resolution would fund the Government at the lower of the House-recommended level and the Senate-recommended level, and in no case could funding exceed 95 percent of the prior year's level. This would mandate a minimum of 5 percent real cuts in any continuing resolution.

The Allard rule is tough legislation. But it is the only reasonable solution. It will force opponents of change to the bargaining table. And it will force them to the table on our terms.

If we fail to adopt continuing resolutions which meet the stringent Allard rule criteria, we risk losing the budget battle to those who favor continuing the status quo. And we risk betraying the American people who sent us to Washington to restore responsibility to the Federal Government.

We must not pass on this opportunity to ensure fundamental change. I ask all

of my colleagues to support fiscal responsibility. I ask all of my colleagues to support the Allard rule.

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MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DIAZ-BALART). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, for those who are watching C-SPAN, they have been already treated to a part of the debate on Medicare and Medicaid. Why do we continue to harp on this subject?

I want to first of all say that I have been on the Medicare program for 10 years. I have paid my payments and paid my dues in that program, and my wife has been on the program for about that time, too. But even more importantly, I was here in the Congress when we created Medicare.

For the last 27 years, I have been on the Medicare committee, the Committee on Ways and Means. During all that time, I have taken a deep interest in the program and have helped nurture it. So I know what I am talking about.

The Republicans, though, have seized upon some reason for giving a great tax cut to their wealthy friends, and the only place they can get the money is out of the Medicare and Medicaid program.

Now, the Republicans are going to take, within a matter of 2 weeks, from Medicare and Medicaid recipients a total of \$489 billion out of those two programs. Let me repeat that: \$489 billion, almost a trillion dollars, half a trillion dollars out of those programs.

And most of that will end up in the pockets of their wealthy friends.

The Medicare and Medicaid programs are powerfully complex, in benefits as well as in structure. The Medicare program is not broke. That is the first thing that we must understand. The Medicare program was set up as a pay-as-you-go program when I was in Congress here. And it has been that way ever since.

We always thought if we could keep a year ahead of the bills, then the program would be lucky. Now we are 7 years ahead of the bills in the program, and the Republicans are wringing their hands, so that they can get enough money out of that program, those programs to pay for their tax cuts for their wealthy friends.

The Medicare program covers not only benefits for elderly people, medical care benefits, but it covers all of the disabled in the United States. It covers all of the medical education in the United States. It covers all of the kidney dialysis for the kidney failure patients in the United States, regardless of age. It covers all of the help for rural hospitals and urban hospitals that must take care of a great many very poor people. So it is a very complex and a very extensive program.

Most of the nursing home care in the United States is paid for out of the Medicaid program, a part of that \$479 billion of cuts. Those people are going to be dumped either back on their families or back on the community because they are there, and they will be there; perhaps no hope for ever curing them. And that is the size and the tragedy of the whole thing we are talking about.

The Medicare program has been changed over the years in order that we could pay the bills from year to year. We will continue to do that regardless of the outcome of this Republican proposal to take so much money out of the program to give for a tax cut for their wealthy friends.

What we are really complaining about is that no one has seen their plan. I have held up for a lot of people a copy of their plan. As we all can plainly see, it is just a blank piece of paper.

On the day we start to debate this plan in the Congress, I will bring in the plan and let us see it from this same podium. It will be 500, 600, 700, maybe 1,000 pages long. And who will understand what is in that plan we have been promised for months? We have seen nothing. We have been promised a plan as of this afternoon, and we got nothing. We have been promised that we would start voting on that next Monday, but now they have moved it until Wednesday a week.

I hope we see the plan before Wednesday a week, because the American public needs to understand what the plan is and how it works and what it will cost them in further out-of-pocket expenditures or cuts in benefits or both.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all Members that remarks in debate must be addressed to the Chair and should not be directed to a viewing audience.

MEDICARE CHANGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, while I am going to speak on corridor H and its importance to West Virginia, I just want to touch for a second on Medicare because today the Speaker of the House and the majority leader of the Senate unveiled what the Medicare plan was, and what we see is a stealth health bill.

They did not give us the details. We do not know much more than what we have known before. We know that they want to cut \$270 billion over the next 7 years. That has been out there for a long time. We know there are a variety of ways they want to do it, except they do not spell the details out. We do know this. While the Speaker says that it will cost only \$7 a month more in premiums to seniors, it is actually going to be, according to the White

House, according to other credible officials, \$20 or \$30 a month more.

We also know this, Mr. Speaker. We know that \$270 billion is 2½ times what it necessary by the estimate of the trustees of the Medicare plan to make it solvent.

Mr. Speaker, stealth health is not a good idea, particularly when rewriting 30 years of Medicare in a 2-week period. Americans must demand to see the plan.

CORRIDOR H

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to corridor H, because this week in our State there are going to be those gathering to discuss the environmental aspects of corridor H and, yes, to attack it. I regret that. Because I do not think that there has been one highway that is more important to West Virginia. I do not think there has been one highway that has been more discussed, reviewed, analyzed than corridor H has been.

In a previous speech on this floor, I discussed why corridor H is a national highway. Let me now discuss the environmental aspects. All those in West Virginia, and many of those from outside West Virginia who have recently driven between Elkins and Buckhannon have marveled at that four-lane strip. They remember how long that drive was before, not only in time and distance but also in just being arduous. They also say, what an incredible piece of road.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we are talking about doing now, from Elkins to the Virginia State line, if people would just let us, if people would get off our backs and let us move this road forward.

Yes, I was involved in the Elkins to Buckhannon segment, particularly when it looked like environmental concerns might either delay it several years or possibly threaten it altogether. And working with a number of agencies, we were able to pull them together. We were able to get the wetlands question dealt with. We were able to deal with the acid-mine drainage. We were able to deal with stream crossings. We were able to safeguard habitat.

I am happy to say that we were able to mitigate wetlands in an innovative way. If we can do it in that rough section of corridor H, surely we can do it for the rest of corridor H as well.

I think it is important to note that the original plan for corridor H was to be a southern route through our State. This was back in the 1970's. The highway department and others recognized that we could not do that under present-day standards. So back in the 1980's, we went forward to look at other options and adopted a northern route for corridor H. I might point out that some environmental organizers at the time said: If you just go the northern route, that is fine with us; we just think it ought not to be in the southern route. Well, they got their wish. Now, yet some want to contest this.