

Mr. President, I can look at the American worker today, as has been pointed out, and see how their real income has been going down, down, down, over a period of time. What they have done is put something away in terms of savings in their pensions, and then out of the Finance Committee came this ability for corporate raiders to raid pension funds, those pension funds paid in by the employees who sacrificed an increase in their wages, their health benefits so that they would have a secure retirement, and so we brought that up here on the floor of the U.S. Senate, a bipartisan amendment, Senator KASSEBAUM and myself, and others—and Senator MOYNIHAN has been a leader in this area—and we passed it 94-5, to prohibit the corporate raiders from plundering the pension funds. They could not even get the door closed over there in that conference, and they came right on back and opened it up again.

So every worker ought to understand that this is a threat to their own security. Why? Because, again, it is the tax breaks, the \$240 billion tax breaks. So, Mr. President, these are some of the items that are troublesome to many of us. We can work out in a way to try and deal with some corporate welfare and some of the unreasonable increases in terms of our defense and in tightening belts on many of the different programs. I have cosponsored those with Senator MCCAIN and others.

We can get to a balanced budget, but not when you are going to have that kind of cut and slice on working families, parents and their children. That is not what the 1994 election was about, and the 1996 election will be about it. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

THE PROMISES OF POWER

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, it is funny, I hear a lot of talk this morning on the floor about compromising with the President on our budget. I say it is funny because he has not officially even received it yet. He says he is going to veto it. But I say, let us give him the opportunity to do that. Let us give him the chance to veto this budget. Let him look in that camera and into the eyes of the American people and tell them he does not want this balanced budget, he does not think Americans deserve it and, what is more, he does not think they should have a tax cut to go along with it, and that money really belongs to Washington to spend.

I might just be a lowly freshman from Minnesota in this body, a plebe by the standards of some of the more senior Members. But I know why I am here: Because I told the people of Minnesota if they would elect me, I would come here and I would work to balance the budget, to reduce the size and the scope of this bloated bureaucracy that we call the Federal Government; and

by doing that we would be able to allow them to keep a little bit more of their own money in the form of a tax cut.

I hear my colleagues on the other side saying how people do not have the money to spend anymore in this country. Well, that follows 30 years of Democratic programs—but, more importantly, 30 years of Democratic tax hikes that have taken that money from our families and sent it to Washington.

Really, what kind of deal has been talked about on the floor here this morning? What kind of deal are the Democrats and the White House talking about? Let me put some of this in perspective. Our budget plan talks about spending \$12 trillion over the next 7 years. The White House and the liberal leadership of the Democrats in the Senate and House want to spend about \$12.5 trillion, at a minimum. Some are willing to work out any kind of agreement today so that we can go home and have a long weekend.

How are we going to tell our taxpayers that we are willing to spend another \$500 billion of their money, collapse on this very important issue, so that can have a long weekend? How do we tell the taxpayers that?

Our budget increases spending on all these programs. Our spending goes up every year. If you listen to those on the other side of the aisle, it is like we are gutting everything that this country has stood for, that somehow this country is going to collapse if we save 5 percent over the next 7 years. By the way, we are only about 1 percent apart on the Medicare, compared to the President's proposal and ours. In your own budgets, if you are making a dollar and they say you can have 99 cents, not a dollar, are you going to say, "I am going to collapse"? We cannot save that 1 percent?

Our budget increases spending on Medicare 64 percent, from \$174 billion this year to nearly \$289 billion in the year 2002—per capita. Everybody that will be on Medicare will be going from about \$4,800 a year to \$6,700 per person a year. That is not a cut. That is not a collapse. That is not solving all the problems or changing the way we do business here in Washington. My colleagues on the other side want to just throw more money at it and take more from the taxpayers and let Washington spend more. Should we agree to more of the same—programs that have failed—just to give them more money to spend?

Where do we get all this money? The Government does not produce any revenues. It only can collect them and disperse them. I am fighting for something that is fair; I am fighting for the taxpayers.

I have been listening to the statements on the floor all morning, and also reading some of the comments in the newspaper following last night's real historic vote on our balanced budget legislation. I found myself then thinking about Abraham Lincoln. This was a man who knew something about

dealing with adversity. He was elected President to lead the Nation through some of the darkest hours. The Civil War had divided the country, pitting neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother. Yet, he found a way then to use the power of the Presidency to inspire the people—not with the harsh rhetoric of hate, but with a vision that something better lay ahead. His words gave people hope to continue fighting for what they believed so strongly was right.

So you know Abraham Lincoln was speaking from the heart, and drawing on the experiences of his own life, when he said, "Nearly all men can stand adversity * * * but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

I am not one who is quick to edit the words of a President that I admire very much, but after nearly a year service in this Chamber, and especially after the antics we have been subjected to over the last month, I think Abraham Lincoln's words would ring equally true if you changed them slightly to read this way: "Nearly all men can stand adversity* * * but if you want to test a man's character, take away his power."

Nearly every Republican here knows how tough it is to have that power taken away and be forced to serve in the minority. Many colleagues on this side of the aisle have been in the majority only to be shifted to the minority after the 1986 elections. It is tough, it is an adjustment, and it is not a lot of fun. But this year it has led to a lot of irresponsible politicking, and it has all been at the expense of truth and substantive debate.

Mr. President, what would you do if you were walking along and stepped into a pool of quicksand, and before you knew it, you were up to your waist, sinking quickly? At first, you would begin to do a lot of shouting, like we hear from the other side. You probably would not care too much about what you were saying, as long as you said it loudly and were attracting a lot of attention. It did not stop the sinking sensation, of course, but at least you felt like you were doing something.

Finally, a political consultant happens to come along—how convenient. They are brilliant at putting the right "spin" on things. Maybe they will figure a way out for you. "How convincingly can you say 'the Republicans are cutting Medicare and putting senior citizens at grave risk?'" asks the consultant. Well, you are willing to try anything at this point, since the only attention your shouting has gotten you so far were the services of a political consultant.

So you shout it—forget that it is not even close to the truth, and that you do not even really believe what you are saying, but you are fighting for your life here. Anything goes.

I just heard the Senator from Massachusetts say, "It will all depend on 1996. This will lead to the election of

1996." Republicans have an eye on an election, too, but it was the 1994 election. We are trying to do what the taxpayers, the American voters, sent us here to do, while the Democrats are looking to 1996 and trying to put up some kind of a hope of regaining this Chamber.

Pretty soon, this quicksand reaches up to your chin. "Any more brilliant ideas?" you ask the consultant. "How about shouting louder this time that the Republicans are hurting children and the poor. That has always worked before for me." You roll your eyes, but you are getting more desperate, and so you start yelling for all that you are worth that the Republicans in Congress are hurting children and hurting the poor.

Of course, it is getting harder to shout because the quicksand is brushing up to the corners of your mouth. Still, nobody is paying attention.

"All right, the old tricks are not working anymore, so it is time for desperate measures," says the consultant.

"I guess I am going to have to throw you this vine, but you have to keep shouting while I get it over to you."

He tosses you the vine, and with your last breath, you scream, "I want a balanced budget—just not this one."

With a final "glug," you sink out of sight.

The political consultant would shake his head and say, "Gee," as he heads off searching for his next victim, "even I could have told you people were not gullible enough to swallow that line."

"We want a balanced budget, just not this one. We want a balanced budget, but we want to spend more money in order to balance the budget. We want to meet a compromise with our Republican friends, but it has to be our way; we want to spend more."

They are talking about coming to our senses. Ask the taxpayer if another \$500 billion in spending is coming to your senses. Mr. President, the opposition is sinking in the quicksand of public opinion. Not even their high-paid consultants and political spin doctors can put a good spin on a bad message.

Instead of facing the financial and moral crises that are challenging this Nation, they want to ignore it and point fingers. If you are not right, you demagog it to death.

If you do not have a plan of your own, you blast the opposition's. If you are not ready to do the people's business, stall them. If your own leadership is afraid to lead, you can resort to name calling and personal attacks.

Well, Mr. President, the more I hear from my colleagues across the aisle, the more difficult it is to understand how they can actually believe their own desperate words.

They claim this is a dark poison over this Capitol. Poison? It is far from it. What I hear in this Chamber and in the other body is the voice of the people.

After years of darkness, the election finally ushered in some light and some tough and that truth is what we are

hearing today. If my colleagues are seeing the truth, and it look like poison to them, they need to take a hard look at just who they are representing because they are not representing the people who are calling my office.

They have lost the power, and it is scaring them silly, and as they grasp for the last vine, look what it's done to them.

Mr. President, yesterday we passed what I believe will become the defining piece of legislation of the 104th Congress.

For the first time in a quarter century, we have balanced the budget, and we are doing it for our children and our future.

We are cutting taxes for working class families.

Of course the Democrats say, "Not this balanced budget. We want a balanced budget." The President, in a 5-minute speech the other day said it 16 times, "We want a balanced budget, but give us more money to do it."

We are giving welfare recipients the opportunity to lift themselves out of a life of dependency and into society. We are preserving and strengthening the Medicare system for this generation and the next. We are doing all of this because we believe we must.

As Abraham Lincoln warned, our character has indeed been tested by the power with which this Congress has been entrusted—entrusted to us by people like Duane Bonnenman who just sent me this fax here this morning, and let me read it quickly.

He said in the fax, "You are in difficult days. Be strong. Be courageous. Never give up. The prevention of the worst economic disaster in world history lies in your hands. Ignore the media. Ignore the polls. Do what you need to do to get it done. But please, don't give up."

Mr. President, I think the Democrats must be getting the same type of phone calls we are. I just want to say I am not here to give up.

Again, I say I know why I am here in the Senate. It is because the people of Minnesota sent me here to help balance the budget and cut taxes. I am not going to do anything short of that. I am not willing to compromise if it means taking more money from average families so that some bureaucrat in Washington can spend it.

I am willing to make sure that we have a fair and equitable budget, one that meets the needs and responsibilities of this Nation, but not one that robs our children's future.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to proceed in morning business for 6 minutes.

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

CHANGING THE COURSE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I have been listening all day, as most of us

have. I suppose one could say that most everything has been said. Perhaps it has not been said by everyone, so it will go on. And it should.

We are talking, of course, about a difficult decision. I think the Senator who is presiding now said we are trustees here for the American people. That is really what we are—trustees.

We are faced with one of the most difficult decisions that has ever been made here, and that is taking a fundamentally different course with the Federal Government than we have had for the past 30 years.

We talk a lot about the cuts. Our friends talk a lot about the cuts. Let me share a couple of things with you. Social Security spending will increase each and every year from \$336 billion in 1995 to \$482 billion in 7 years, a 44-percent increase.

Mandatory Medicare spending will increase in each and every year from \$178 to \$289 billion, a 62-percent increase in 7 years.

Medicaid spending will increase each and every year from \$89 to \$122 billion, a 37-percent increase.

Mr. President, what we are seeking to do is to preserve these kinds of programs that we all believe in—health care programs for the elderly, health care programs for the poor. In order to preserve them, you have to have some kind of control on expenditures. Medicare expenditures have gone up three times as fast as inflation, twice as fast as health care in general.

So we can do some things about that and I am pleased, frankly, to hear our friends on the other side say that they are interested in cooperating in seeking a balanced budget. Frankly, there was not much evidence of that interest in balancing the budget prior to today. Most of the folks we listen to who decry the balanced budget and now embrace it have been here for 20 years. We have not balanced a budget one time in 30 years. Hopefully there now is some commitment to it.

I understand and I think as we listen to these things we should all understand that there are different philosophical political points of view about how you approach it.

There are people who genuinely believe that more Government is better, more spending is better, that you should, indeed, extract more money into the public pot so it can be spent that way. I happen not to agree with that.

I think that is not the majority view. But it is a view and I understand that.

It is also interesting to me, my friend from North Dakota and the Senator from Massachusetts get up at least several times daily and talk about how bad things are, therefore, we need to help, but are not willing to change the programs that have made things as bad as they are.

It seems to me there is a principle there. If you do not like the results of what has been happening, you ought not to continue to do the same thing.