

the Immaculate Conception Church in his hometown of Watertown, SD.

Over the years Father Robert has faithfully served the Catholic church in many different parishes across eastern South Dakota. He has been ministering in Alexandria since 1985. During his career Father Robert has authored 20 books and numerous articles in Catholic publications. He also has taken pilgrimages with 3,000 youth. Certainly, South Dakotans of all ages have benefited from his very active career of service.

I am just one of many South Dakotans who have profited from Father Robert's wisdom. His valuable advice will always be greatly appreciated. He is loved and respected by many. I am honored to join in observing this very special occasion for Father Robert.

#### THE DEATH OF JOHN F. BLAKE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, the CIA, the Senate Intelligence Committee and our country lost a loyal servant on March 27 when Jack Blake passed away after a long illness. Jack was an OSS veteran who became one of the CIA's premier managers, serving as its director of logistics, Deputy Director for Administration and acting Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. He also served as president of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers.

In 1981, when Senator Barry Goldwater became the first Republican to chair the Select Committee on Intelligence, he chose Jack Blake to be staff director of the committee. Together, Senator Goldwater and Jack Blake established the principle that the transfer from a Democratic to a Republican majority would not mean an end to the Senate's bipartisan oversight of sensitive national security matters. They also made the point that the intelligence community's best friends were capable of examining its activities with a critical eye, for the sake of improving this vital function and safeguarding the liberties of our citizens.

Jack Blake went on to become a professor at the Defense Intelligence College and frequently brought his classes back to the Hill to meet with congressional overseers and see for themselves that we were not monsters, but people of good will. His tremendous good humor and perseverance served him and his country well. We will miss Jack Blake, but we will also continue to profit from his life of good works. The Senate was fortunate to have known him.

#### THE DEATH OF RICHARD E. CURL

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, our Nation lost a valuable member of its national security team recently, when Richard E. Curl died at the age of 77. Dick Curl was Director of the Office of Intelligence Resources in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He was not the former Director, not the retiring Director, but very

much the active Director of that office, even at the age of 77.

Dick Curl devoted his life to intelligence. He served as a naval intelligence officer in both World War II and the Korean war, and with the State Department between those wars. And Dick began his work for INR in 1952. Overall, he gave his country over half a century of service.

Mr. Curl's obituary states that his work "involved contact with various foreign intelligence services as well as U.S. intelligence agencies." Suffice it to say that his role was often that of a mediator between the two different cultures, explaining the uses of intelligence to policymakers and Foreign Service officers while also ensuring that the risks and benefits of intelligence operations were weighed in light of broader U.S. policy interests that might be affected if something went wrong. Much of Dick Curl's career was spent teaching the policy and intelligence communities to listen to each other.

The staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence knew Mr. Curl since at least the early 1980's. They found him a valuable source of information and good counsel. Dick Curl will be missed by both the committee and his country.

#### RURAL SUMMIT

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I come to the floor for a different purpose today, however. I want to describe something that is happening tomorrow in Ames, IA, and something that happened last Friday in Bismarck, ND.

Some many months ago, I and Congressman DICK DURBIN, from Illinois, asked President Clinton to host a rural summit in our country prior to the writing of the new 5-year farm bill in Congress this year. The President took our suggestion and set December 1 of last year as a date for a rural summit. It would be the first ever of its kind held in this country prior to the writing of a new farm bill.

On December 1, it turned out that the Senate was going to reconvene and vote on the GATT treaty, and the result was the rural summit had to be postponed. The President was required to remain in Washington, and others who were to participate were to remain here as well. A new date was set, and that new date is tomorrow.

The President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Agriculture, and other Cabinet Members will go to Ames, IA, and they will convene a rural summit. The purpose of that is to discuss, before the new farm bill is written, what works and what does not in rural America, what kind of a farm program works to save family farmers, to try to provide an injection of economic life into rural economies; how can we improve on it, how can we change it, how can we offer more hope to rural America?

I give great credit to President Clinton for his willingness to do this. It is

long overdue that we take a fresh look at all of the programs and all of the initiatives and all of the efforts that are designed to try to help rural America. This is, after all, one country, not many countries, and the one country includes, yes, some of the biggest cities but also some of the smallest counties.

In my home county in rural North Dakota, as an example, where fewer than several thousand people live in the entire county, they lost 20 percent of their population in that county in the 1980's. In the first 5 years of the 1990's, from 1990 to 1995, the new census report shows they lost another 11 percent of their population.

The flip side of economic stress, that we register in the cities by taking a look at poverty and unemployment, for rural America is out migration, people getting in their car and leaving because there is no opportunity, they feel, in rural counties. What is happening in rural America is that many rural counties and rural areas are shrinking like prunes. The lifeblood is leaving these rural counties.

And so the question is what works and what does not, what kind of a farm plan, what kind of a rural economic development policy should we have in rural America to give everybody in this country a chance; yes, even those who live in sparsely populated areas.

Prior to the summit that will be held in Ames, IA, tomorrow, the President asked the new Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, to hold six regional forums around the country, and he has done that. I believe the last one is today in Illinois. He held one of those six forums in Bismarck, ND, last Friday.

At that forum, the Secretary of Agriculture brought along most of the Assistant Secretaries, and they were all there as a team from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to listen to family farmers. About 700 to 800 people crowded into this facility, the Farmers Livestock Exchange, to spend 3 hours at this forum. Another probably 200 people could not get into the facility, but because it was broadcast on a couple of radio stations, there were people sitting in the parking lot listening to their radios to hear the discussion during these 3 hours about rural America, about the farm bill, and about what works to try to rescue, revive, and breathe some life into rural America.

I know this subject would not sound very interesting or important to a lot of Americans. Most Americans take a look at rural America or farmers and they do not think much about them. They go to the store and buy elbow macaroni, and it is in a carton. Well, elbow macaroni does not come in a carton. That is the way it is sold, but it comes from semolina flour. You get that by grinding durum wheat that comes from the wheat field of someone who, most often, is a family farmer who risks all of his economic strength

and crosses his fingers and hopes he will not get rained on too much, or that it will not be too dry, or that insects do not destroy the crop. They hope to harvest it, and when they harvest it, they hope the price will not be so low that they lose a ton of money. Those are the risks and uncertainties they face.

Why did anywhere from 800 to 1,000 people show up Friday in Bismark, ND, to meet Secretary Glickman and talk to him for 3 hours about what they think ought to be done? Because it is their livelihood, their future. This is not a case of it being inconvenient if things do not work out. This is a case of losing everything you have if you are on a family farm and things do not work out.

The basic message Friday in North Dakota by all of those family farmers and others speaking to the Agriculture Secretary was a message that the current farm program is not enough and does not work very well. That does not mean that we need more in order to make it work better. The resources we now spend on the farm program in this country, better applied, could provide a better life for family farmers by providing a safety net to give family farmers a chance to make a decent living.

We do not need to provide farm price support to the biggest corporate agri-factories in America for every bushel of grain they produce; yet, we do—a loan rate for everybody in the program for every bushel of wheat they produce, no matter how large they are.

We have all seen reports that the Prince of Liechtenstein was getting benefits for farming in Texas, and a group of Texans who concocted a consortium or amalgamation partnership of sorts and they farm in Montana, section by section, by dropping seeds out of the helicopters. They are not farming the land; they are farming the farm program. We have seen those abuses. We ought to eliminate them.

We ought to change the farm program so that we have a farm program that is actually able to spend less money but provide more help to family-sized farmers. I have submitted a proposal, and I have entered it into the RECORD, and I have written about it, and I will provide a piece I have written on the subject.

This proposal is substantially different than the current farm program. It says let us retain a basic safety net of support prices, and do it in a way that provides the strongest support for the first increment of production, which has the ability to provide the most help for family-sized farms. Above that, you do not need price supports. If you want to farm the whole country, God bless you. But the Federal Government does not have to be your financial partner. You can assume those risks alone.

Second, in addition to a better price support for production designed to help family farmers, let us get government off farmers' backs and stop having gov-

ernment describe what they can plant, when they can plant, and where they can plant it. Let us get family farmers better prices for the output of their production, and let the rest of the people above that—if you want to plant above that—get their signals from the marketplace. More help, less government, at less cost. That is what I want to see from a farm program.

If the purpose of the farm program is not to help family farmers, if that is not the first sentence or preamble of the farm program—we design a farm program because we want the farm program to try to provide a safety net under family farmers, because for social and economic reasons it is important for America to have a network of family farms, and family farmers do not have the financial strength to withstand price depressions that are international price swings; they do not have the financial strength to withstand crop failures and price depressions, so that is why we have a safety net.

If that is not the first line of the farm bill, saying this farm bill is designed to provide a safety net for family-sized farms, then scrap the whole farm bill. We do not need a farm bill to help corporations plow. They will do fine. They are big enough, strong enough, and they can plow enough land to farm the whole country. That is fine. I do not happen to think that is good for the country, but if that is who is going to plow the ground in America, they do not need the farm program.

If it is about helping farmers get a decent price support, make that the first line in the farm bill and make the bill comport to that.

In the early 1860's, President Abraham Lincoln created a U.S. Department of Agriculture. By the way, he had nine employees in the Department of Agriculture in the 1860's. One and a third centuries later, we have a USDA, but it has 100,000 employees, that is adding the Forest Service to it. It is a behemoth organization. My central premise is that it is either going to help family farmers, or we do not need any of the USDA.

The President has done the right thing in having regional farm forums. They are having a rural summit at Ames, IA, tomorrow to listen and hear what farmers are saying in this country and then write a new farm plan that does real good for family farmers.

Let us not just do what we have done for the past couple of farm plans and say we will have the same farm plan but a little less. I do not support that. Let us change it in a way that says this farm program relates to the needs of family farmers, and do it in a way that costs less money to the Federal Government and also has less Government interference in the lives of our farmers.

I am not going to be able to be in Ames, IA, tomorrow. The President invited me to go. He invited Congressman DURBIN to go. Since the House of Representatives is not in session, I ex-

pect that Congressman DURBIN will be there. I was not able to take advantage of the President's invitation because it appears we are going to have votes in the Senate tomorrow.

I was pleased to participate in the regional forums, and I am delighted to have been a small part in doing what I think we should do in this country—having the President convene a rural summit and start thinking and talking about what works and what does not, what can work to breathe economic life into our rural counties and towns, what can give people in those areas an opportunity for the same kinds of jobs and hope and future that many others in our country now have.

Mr. President, I want to say that I appreciate the indulgence of the Senator from Washington. I will be coming to the floor to speak on the subject that is on the floor—product liability—at some point in the future. I am on the Senate Commerce Committee and am interested in the subject. I appreciate his allowing me to speak in morning business on another matter.

With that, I yield the floor.

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF USDA DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I was a strong supporter in the last Congress of the bill passed and signed into law by President Clinton regarding the reorganization of the Department of Agriculture and Federal crop insurance reform. I would like to again extend my congratulations to Senator LUGAR and Senator LEAHY for their outstanding efforts on the passage of this very important legislation.

A driving force behind crop insurance reform was to make basic crop insurance obligatory in an effort to avoid ad hoc disaster bills in Congress. Under crop insurance reform, crops that are not eligible for insurance will qualify for disaster relief under the newly created Non-Insured Assistance Program [NAP]. We are not sure how the NAP Program will work and how effective it will be in helping farmers of noninsurable crops who have suffered a natural disaster. The NAP regulations are still being drafted by the Department of Agriculture.

California agriculture has recently experienced devastating floods. California Food and Agriculture Secretary Henry J. Voss has estimated that damage resulting from the March winds, rains, and flooding in California is over \$665 million.

Commodities suffering severe losses statewide include almonds, \$208 million; strawberries, \$63 million; plums and prunes, \$53 million; lettuce, \$40 million; and apricots, \$20 million.

One of the hardest hit counties is Monterey County, which has suffered over \$240,000 million in damages. Over 70,000 acres of agricultural land have been lost or damaged. I share Congressman SAM FARR's grave concern about