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No. 8

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. GOODLING].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 23, 1996.

I hereby designate the Honorable WILLIAM F. GOODLING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 123. Concurrent resolution to provide for the provisional approval of regulations applicable to certain covered employing offices and covered employees and to be issued by the Office of Compliance before January 23, 1996.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of May 12, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leaders limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] for 3 minutes.

KEEP THE CAPITAL IN BUSINESS

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this morning to welcome my colleagues back from the short recess and to say they ought to be glad they were not here for the blizzard of 1996. We were snowed in, and I mean that quite literally.

For 4 days the Federal Government was shut down and this time this body had nothing to do with it, I am pleased to say. The District of Columbia was shut down as well. We do not mind if it is the snow. We do mind when the majority shuts us down.

I am pleased to believe, as I do, that there will not be another shutdown on Friday. I ask that the body recognize when a tool has run its course, and Federal workers I think would be grateful if we would move on with our business.

I do want to remind the body that the District budget is not yet passed, the appropriation is not yet out. Yet, we budgeted \$2.1 million for snow and one blizzard has used it all up, and more. We spent \$3.3 million.

I am grateful that the body approved a continuing resolution to last until September 30, but that allows the District only to spend its own money. We have only \$327 million of the \$712 million that we are due as payment in lieu of taxes. The absence of the cash money meant that the District could not plow the District of Columbia, and we had to call the Federal Government in because vendors would not contract with people who could not pay their bills.

I am pleased that the appropriations subcommittees in the Senate and the House have been working to solve their disagreement on vouchers. It is a disagreement among Republicans that is keeping our budget from coming through. That disagreement, I believe, could be solved and settled given the good faith, good work that has been ensuing during this recess.

I ask that the District get its full appropriation no later than Friday so that the District, 4 months late, can start its government up.

I also ask that the body be at pains not to allow this to happen again. As you know, the District is on its financial knees. Everything had happened to it, it seemed, but being put out of business, and it was put out of business for a week, when the Capital of the United States was shut down.

I ask this body, when the appropriation comes before it, to pass it speedily and to recognize that chief among your constitutional obligations is the obligation to let the Capital City of the United States engage in the business of running the Capital of the United States. Imagine how we look when the Congress looks as though it is not facilitating keeping the Capital of the United States in business. This would be the best way to start and end this week.

HOW BUDGET IS BALANCED A KEY QUESTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I come today to address the budget impasse issue that has been on the minds of us and many Americans for quite some time. We are all very concerned, I know, about why we have not gotten to a balanced budget and what the skinny is on what is going to happen with respect to it.

I think that this needs to be put in perspective. President Clinton took 11 months and four offers before he got a budget proposal to Congress that was balanced according to the Congressional Budget Office, the only objective arbiter of such matters around here. It took him 11 months to do that.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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I think it is also important to recognize that when he got there, that that budget was back-ended. What he sent to us has most of the savings that he has proposed to occur in the seventh year of this budget, after he has left office assuming that he would be re-elected President again this fall.

It is a good start. It was important to get him to put it on the table. But it was never the objective of the new Republican majority in Congress simply to get a balanced budget. How we balance the budget is just as important as getting a balanced budget. The manner we go about it is just as important as achieving a balanced budget.

When the President put his budget that was in balance for the first time on the table in December, it should have been the starting point, not the end point, for negotiations to get us to a product that we can all agree to and accept. It is not a dollar question alone by any stretch of the imagination. To that extent the President is right. This is a debate much more fundamental than that. Republicans in this new majority believe in reducing the size and scope of the Federal Government. We believe in taking programs wherever we can and sending them back to the States and local governments for them to carry out their responsibilities, for them to make the decisions in welfare, in Medicaid, in crime fighting and many other areas. Big government in Washington and the way liberal Democrats that have run this place for 40 years before we came to be the new majority obviously did not believe that. President Clinton's rhetoric for quite some time in his first election campaign and through the past 3 years or so would have led one to believe that he somewhat sympathized with this. But I want to make it perfectly clear from my observations that that is not the way at all he is conducting himself now. He is kicking in with the big-government liberals that have run this place all these years. I think there is no better illustration of this anywhere than what has been put on the table in the negotiations here in January.

The Republicans in the congressional leadership put on the table a Medicaid proposal that was supported by 68 Democrats in this House, written by them basically, and the President said "no" to that. The Republican leadership put on the table a Medicare proposal that had the endorsement of 47 Democrats, and the President said "no" to that. And the Republicans put on the table a welfare reform proposal that had passed the other body that only had nine Democrats dissenting on it and the President said "no" to that. He does not want the changes that are proposed in that. He does not want to send the responsibilities largely back to the States to handle the programs that we have been unable to handle effectively and efficiently up here all the years we have been here.

We cannot have a credible balanced budget without doing that. We cannot

have a credible balanced budget without addressing the two-thirds of Federal spending that are in entitlement programs. Yes, we proposed some substantive changes in Medicare. The President proposes to demagogue that issue instead of addressing those substantive issues. What we have proposed, as I said, have been endorsed by a lot of folks as positive common sense.

We would protect under Medicare all of those opportunities for anybody who is on Medicare now to stay in traditional Medicare. If one wanted to take choices and leave and go and do some other things that we might suggest, we propose that, but we would increase, not cut, Medicare spending. It would be increased by more than 50 percent over the 7 years in the proposal we have put on the table, and anybody who says otherwise to the contrary is telling something that is not true.

We would increase the spending on Medicaid by more than 50 percent as well. There is absolutely no truth to the argument that Republicans are out to gut or cut or do anything dastardly to Medicare or Medicaid or any of these other proposals. We simply want to allow the States the opportunity to make many of these decisions and we want to have fundamental reforms that give people choices about how they are going to handle and conduct their affairs with regard to their future years and retirement. But President Clinton and the liberal cronies that created big Federal Government spending do not want any part of that.

When the President is serious and ready to negotiate a true balanced budget deal over 7 years, not just the numbers within the CBO system, but that gets us and moves us in the direction of reducing the size and scope of the Federal Government, then I believe we will sit down and have some hope of getting to a balanced budget. Until and unless that occurs, it is apparent that he wants to please the big government interests in his party as he goes into the election this fall and he does not want to face the tough choices that are involved that would have to drive some wedges in that core base of his, and he wants to spend the time demagoguing the Medicare and Medicaid issues for his campaign purposes. He does not sound serious to me.

If he wants to get serious, it is time that he get serious over the substance of this matter instead of the way he has conducted it so far. Let us get a balanced budget, but how we do it is just as important as doing it.

DEMOCRATS SEEK FAIRNESS IN BUDGET DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. WYNN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, we do have a new majority. Let us see what they have brought us. Well, basically we

have had a year of acrimonious and bitter debate. We have had a costly and wasteful government shutdown and we still have a budget stalemate. Why?

Well, the dust has settled and it is abundantly clear that the problem is the same problem it has always been. The Republicans want to give a big tax break to the wealthy. The Republicans want to give a big tax break to wealthy Americans.

We will recall first they said, give us a 7-year balanced budget, 7 is a magic number. The President has agreed to that. They then said no, we have to have CBO audited numbers, CBO real numbers. The President has given them that. They said they wanted to protect children and the future of our society, future generations.

But when the President of the United States presented a balanced budget, balanced in 7 years with CBO real numbers, what did they do? They walked away from the table. Why did they walk away from the table? The gentleman from Florida said it is how we balance the budget.

Well, they wanted to include a big tax break for the wealthy. The President has said he will not go along with that. The President and Democrats are for a balanced budget, but we believe it should not just be a balanced budget, it should also be a fair budget.

In truth, in point of fact, we should not have any tax breaks in this budget. If we are serious about balancing the budget and eliminating the deficit, we do not need to be taking money out of the Treasury in the form of a tax break. But again the President has been willing to compromise, and he has offered modest tax relief for education deductions and for people with children under the age of 14 for the true middle class.

But that is not good enough for the Republican new majority. They want to give tax breaks to people who make over \$100,000 a year. Ladies and gentlemen, if their package goes through, half of the tax breaks, half of the \$245 billion in tax breaks will go to the richest 2 percent of Americans. The richest 2 percent of Americans will get half of the tax breaks. That is not a fair balanced budget.

Let us move on and talk about Medicaid, because that specifically hurts our seniors and our disabled citizens. Item No. 1, there was not a single public hearing on specifically Medicaid cuts. Many people do not understand and say, well, this is another, quote, entitlement program.

In point of fact, nearly 60 percent of Medicaid funds pay for acute and long-term care and services for elderly and people with disabilities; 60 percent to the elderly and people with disabilities. Thirty-five percent pays for long-term care. That means when your mother or father or aunt or uncle or grandparents have to go into a nursing home, Medicaid is paying for that. Medicaid pays 52 percent of the Nation's nursing home bill. Why? Because nursing home care