

yet they continue those same arguments. We just heard the litany go on. What is their argument, then, if he has done those essential things that they say they wanted?

Why not move on, as one of my colleagues suggested, to the farm bill? I can tell my colleagues that farmers in my State are uncertain as to what their future will hold. Democrats are simply insisting that the budget we pass hold fast to the principle that made this Nation strong; principles that Republicans and Democrats should indeed support. Democrats want to safeguard health care for seniors, for children, for poor families; to promote education for our future and to protect our environment.

Here we are again almost facing yet a third shutdown and threatening to default on our Nation's liability and debt; that we will not honor our obligation. What kind of governance is that? Is that being responsible?

Yes, we have made progress in the last few years. Unemployment is down, interest is indeed low, and inflation is stabilized. That is progress we all, Republicans and Democrats, should want to protect. Progress like that, however, will stop and our economy will suffer if we do not work together. Both Democrats and Republicans must come and work together to prevent a national default on our obligations.

I can tell my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, this Republican revolution is paralyzing this Nation and it will do great damage to this economy. It is now time for cool heads and rational minds and thoughtful persons to come together, to join together and revive what is important to Americans in this Nation.

NAFTA AND SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, January first marked the 2-year anniversary of NAFTA. As we begin the third year of tariff reductions and opening markets under this accord, it is appropriate to take a moment to assess our progress—so far reports show NAFTA has been a mixed bag: Mostly the news is positive; however, there are some serious problem areas that clearly need attention. In Florida, we are particularly concerned about the negative impact that import surges of tomatoes and other winter fruit and vegetables are having on southwest Florida's growers, the packing houses and the workers in these industries. This is a bi-partisan concern—and I am pleased that Senator BOB GRAHAM is working this issue in the Senate. On November 16, 1993, the President wrote a letter to the members of the Florida delegation, assuring us that he was committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure that the trade representative and the ITC would take prompt and effective

action to protect the United States vegetable industry against price-based import surges from Mexico. Now is the time for him to take that action because, unfortunately, it seems that the safeguards in NAFTA and the implementing language—the volume-based snapback provision, the automatic price monitoring and the expedited import relief procedures—have not lived up to our hopes. They are not working properly. I am currently drafting legislation calling on the President to live up to the promise he made and to protect our growers from potentially unfair Mexican trading practices. In the meantime, my colleagues in the Florida delegation and I will continue to work in a bipartisan, bicameral fashion to address the urgent needs of the Florida fruit and vegetable industries. To their credit the Department of Agriculture has been very forthcoming and willing to work with the Florida delegation and our growers.

Unfortunately, I have to say that the USTR could be more helpful. Of course, the administration and its officers can't fix all of the problems, some of that is our responsibility in Congress. In response to the very real needs of the tomato and fruit and vegetable industries in Florida, a series of bills have been introduced to address definitional problems faced by our growers when they attempted to seek relief through the section 202 process, to address the differences in enforced packing requirements between Mexican and domestic growers, and to create national country of origin labeling to allow consumers to make more informed decisions when they make their individual purchasing choices at the market. An invitation has been issued for U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Kantor and Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman to brief Florida delegation members on the tomato and winter fruit and vegetable situation. I understand this meeting will take place tomorrow and I hope it will bring progress we need and look for. This is a critical issue for Florida and an important one for the Nation.

I think it is also a very critical one in terms of living up to the promises that have been made.

Those of us who felt NAFTA would be good for the United States of America want to be certain that we correct the sore spots that are there, if they are correctable. If not, we will have to excise those sore spots with legislation. In any event, once we see those sore spots, the time is now to move, and we have seen them and we must move.

WEST VIRGINIA DIGGING OUT FROM RECORD FLOOD

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

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, today West Virginia is digging out from a record

flood, just like your State of Pennsylvania, and like other areas of the mid-Atlantic. I want to report to Congress today on our efforts and to ask for assistance.

Mr. Speaker, this was a true bicoastal flood for our State, going from the Ohio River all the way to the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, from border to border of our State. The Governor, during the weekend, declared 29 of our 55 counties in a state of emergency. Thousands have been driven from their homes or had their homes and jobs threatened. Water systems have been damaged, sewer systems have been compromised. Businesses in some cases have been wiped out, others will take a while to resume. Highways in some cases have been washed out.

From Friday night, beginning Friday night in the basement of the State capital and the State Office of Emergency Services office, I have tried to monitor and follow this flood as closely as possible. From Friday night, with the State OES personnel, to traveling with the Governor on Saturday to our hardest hit central West Virginia counties, to going Sunday night to Mason County to watch the Ohio River as it began its relentless rise, and then yesterday back across the State to Jefferson County where I watched the swollen Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers as they began to recede, I can testify about how awesome and how devastating this flood has been for many of our people.

Today and yesterday our staff has been fanning out across the hardest hit counties trying to bring immediate word about where people can get assistance and to assist in assessing the damage.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of this devastation, of course, we also see incredible acts of human spirit, and I just cannot speak highly enough or applaud loudly enough nor respect enough those thousands of volunteers across our State at every level: The hundreds of National Guard that were mobilized and responded. We do not know what it means, in a county that is still watching the flood waters recede, to see those National Guard uniforms come rolling in on those trucks bringing the promise of help.

The emergency service personnel at every level in the county and the State, the Red Cross, the sheriff and police departments, the highway department staffs, the Corps of Engineers, who control the many dams that prevented the damage from being far worse. All of them working long hours, Mr. Speaker. Long hours, of course, that did not start just with this flood, but started with the blizzard that began over 10 days before. Then the flood came and many of those volunteers and personnel are still working. Many individual acts of people rebuilding immediately their lives.

One question I have received, Mr. Speaker, time after time as I made my trip back across the flood-stricken

areas, "BOB, will funding be cut off next week for any of the vital activities?" I am confident that this Congress will not permit that to happen.

I am assured that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is taken care of financially, at least for the immediate future, but we must also remember the other flood recovery programs, the Small Business Administration's disaster recovery loans, the Economic Development Administration, which has been so active in economic recovery in the Midwest and many of our other devastated areas, the HUD, Housing and Urban Development programs, and so the many other programs, too. We must make sure and vow, Mr. Speaker, that no amount of partisan politics will stop these vital programs from going forward and that there will be no interruption in flood recovery.

Mr. Speaker, if I can report some positive things. Our death rate was nowhere near as high as 1985, even through the 1985 flood levels were reached in some communities. Some communities have been hit every bit as hard as 1985, but many, some in the Eastern Panhandle, saw far less damage. Sometimes the water did not crest at the predicted levels. In other cases flood prevention efforts such as dikes and levies have been installed. We are smarter in many of our areas now and we know to evacuate. We have a much more professional emergency services operation.

But there are also farther reaching flood implications. While many counties in the central part of our State did not see the 1985 flood levels, at the same time we had to deal with the Ohio River. Nine additional counties that were not affected, but did see record levels not seen since 1972 in Hurricane Agnes. So this time we are much more far-reaching in the flood devastation.

Mr. Speaker, one woman stood on her front porch pushing liquid mud down the steps with a broom. Behind her stood her sons and her neighbors helping her dig out. Tears ran down her face as she cried and quietly said, "I have lost my home and my job." Her home had been devastated for the second time in 10 years. Her workplace has been wiped out and her employer said he was not returning.

Mr. Speaker, she knows what she has to do. She will do the work. She is going to rebuild. She just asks that wherever this Congress and this Federal Government, her Federal Government, can help, it do so and we owe her that.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 104TH CONGRESS

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

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, as a former teacher, I know that you are in-

terested, like I am, in history and the historic significance of events as they occur. I know that the Speaker of the House, NEWT GINGRICH, being a former history professor, is also interested in historic significance.

I say that because we can look back on the first session, and let us take a look at some of the historic significance that has occurred in this Congress, in the first session.

Well, one of the biggest things that is going to go down in the history books is that it is the first and only Congress, the first and only Congress led by the Republican majority, that closed down the Federal Government for a 6-day period in November, and a 21-day period in December of 1995 and January of 1996. Total of 27 days. Never in the history of this country has that ever occurred. That will be in the history books.

□ 1330

What was the total cost of that to our taxpayers by the Republican majority that says they want to save money, they want to cut out waste in Government? A waste of over \$1 billion. Not a million, folks. A billion. A waste of over \$1 billion. That is the historic significance. That is to the taxpayers. Now, it is all orchestrated by the Speaker of the House, NEWT GINGRICH.

Another historic significance. It is only the third time in the history of this country, over 200 years, that this House has gone 365 days, we opened up in January 3 or 4, if I remember, of 1995, we ended up January 3 of this year. Five minutes later we opened the second session. That has only happened three times. So we worked 365 days. We worked long hours. We had more votes in this House than at any time in the near past, from the 93d to the 104th Congress. More votes. But another historic significance. We did less legislation enacted into law than any other Congress in the first session since 1933.

So we did a lot here yelling and hollering, a lot of passing bills and sending them to the Senate and the Republicans over in the Senate, led by the majority leader from Kansas say, "No, we don't want that. That's too radical. We're not going to do that. That's too extreme." And as a result, we did almost nothing.

That leads me to right now. Let us look at today. There is nobody else here. There is not another Member on the floor. We are back after 2 weeks' vacation. Where is everybody? They are not here because they are not going to do anything today.

Members, what are we going to do today? Well, we are going to do a little Corrections Day bill. We are going to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act relating to standards for constructed water conveyances. That is really important to the country.

We are going to award a Congressional gold medal to Ruth and Billy Graham. We are going to do a bill on Saddleback Mountain-Arizona; and

then we are going to make certain technical corrections in laws relating to Native Americans. That is what we are going to do today. That is really important.

We are not going to do welfare reform. We are not going to do line-time veto. We are not going to do any of those things. We probably will not do them the rest of this year.

What are we going to do tomorrow? Well, tomorrow we may do a continuing resolution, because the Republican majority under NEWT GINGRICH now tell us that they are not going to close down the Government anymore so we have to pass one because the Government will close down after January 26 if we do not. So we will do that. Everybody agrees on that. There will be no problem with that. It will take about a half an hour at the most. I do not know what the rest of the day we are going to do or what we are going to do Friday.

They tell me we may have a new conference report on the defense authorization bill and we may do that. Then they are telling me, and I hear through the grapevine, we may quit until sometime near the end of February.

Talk about a do-nothing Congress. I do not know, I think most of us should go ahead and send all of our pay back, because most of the Members have not done anything. I say to Speaker GINGRICH, that it is time to get things done. You want a balanced budget? You can have a balanced budget. You know you can have a balanced budget. Because the Democratic coalition budget is balanced in 7 years. By 2002 it is a balanced budget scored by CBO, the Congressional Budget Office. But it does not have your big tax cut in it, it does not have that \$245 billion for the wealthy.

That is why you will not do it. You really want the tax cut for the wealthy. You really do not want a balanced budget.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. GOODLING]. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Harold Bradley, S.J., Georgetown University, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

With praise and adoration we offer this prayer, O God, in appreciation for all Your blessings to us and to all people. We are aware of our responsibilities to use Your blessings as good