

they did not want it to apply to them and so they fired them before Christmas.

But, Mr. Speaker, not one peep in their defense. Not one peep. What hypocrisy.

□ 1215

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

FULFILLING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think that once again it is important to explain to the American people really what is going on in this body. The American people have sent us to work. There are millions and millions of citizens every day going to work. They hold in this body a great deal of trust. The responsibility of funding and financing this Nation, of ensuring defense, of presiding over the commerce and making sure that the economy is both healthy and provides opportunity for jobs belongs to this Congress. Yet now we find on January 25 we do not have a budget, primarily because the Republican majority never completed the task of providing the right appropriations bill in early fall of 1995.

We find now that we are discussing not lifting the debt ceiling limit and frivolously bringing this Nation to the brink of economic destruction. We have six former Secretaries of the Treasury who have indicated that, if we do not lift this debt ceiling and default on the full faith and credit of these United States, we will send this Nation into a tailspin that will be comparable to the Depression of the 1930's. Yet, we find that being still raised as a possibility by the leadership of the Republican majority.

My plea is not personally. It is not a personal plea. I will be here to work,

for it is the duty I owe to my constituents and my responsibility is to be here in the U.S. Congress to ensure that we have a budget. My plea is for those Social Security recipients on March 1 who will not get their checks. My plea is for the veterans who will not get their checks on March 1. And my plea, again, is for the Bosnian troops who will not get their checks on March 1.

It is for the working man and woman, who have a variety of credit cards. They might not want all those credit cards, but on each one is an interest amount. That will go up if we do not raise the debt ceiling by a certain period of time. So will the consumer loans, so will the education loans, all of that, the interest will be outrageous.

I do not believe that there has been a great deal of compromise to date. Much of the media reported the fact that the President spent most of the holiday in one-on-one meetings with the Republican majority leadership of the House to discuss saving Medicare, to discuss saving Medicaid, to discuss saving education opportunities for our young people and protecting the environment and to discuss balancing the budget.

Many great leaders have fallen over the last couple of weeks, and most of them were the kind of leaders who said government is not a win/win situation; government is the art of compromise and the ability to work together. Government should not allow diverse interests, singular interests to take over, but it should work toward common ground, focus, funnel your energies toward what is best for all of America.

I stand before this House because I am saddened as a freshman to believe that we have forgotten the Founding Fathers' wisdom, for we would imagine that they did not have the strength of mind to understand that this Nation would be some 200 million citizens plus when only at that time there were some 4 million in a few colonies.

They had a vision by establishing a presidency, the judiciary and these bodies of Congress, both House and Senate. They gave us our special responsibilities, the House being in control of the purse strings, getting through the budget and ensuring that this Nation stood strong with a solid economy.

Yet, I believe that the Republican leadership has forgotten the words and wisdom of our Founding Fathers, and that was that these bodies of government should work together, that we should not overtake each other but, in fact, in our own wisdom and responsibilities, we should each play our role. The President having responsibility for all of this country, and we, as a collective body, representing our constituents, coming together for the best common good.

This has not happened. So my challenge is that we must pass a clean resolution that lifts the debt ceiling to ensure that veterans are paid, to ensure that Social Security payments are made, that the troops who are laying

their life on the line in Bosnia are paid and their families back home are protected and that we never, never, never again shut this Government down. We owe this not only to our working Americans but to all America, because it is a tragedy that we have forgotten the words of our Founding Fathers that we are to work for the common good and together. We must do that.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

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

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, here we go again. There are not many on the floor again. We are not doing anything. Day before yesterday we did a few minor bills. Yesterday we did one conference report that everybody basically agreed with, very few Members disagreed with.

What have we done so far today? Nothing. What are we going to do today? I do not know.

Talk about lunacy. A mental institution, that is what this is. I never saw any place that operates like this. There is one Member, we are supposed to take up a continuing resolution today to continue the operations of the Federal Government that are not funded because the Republicans have not passed the appropriation bills. They have been working behind closed doors, some of them, maybe 5 or 10 of them at the most, not one Democrat, not one member of the public, not one member of the media been working on that bill. Nobody knows what is in it.

I have been told that there is one Democrat, one that just recently got a copy of what he thinks might be the latest version, which has gone through many changes on what they are proposing to do this afternoon to keep the Federal Government open.

It is very easy. All they have to do is come up here with a resolution that is clean and says that the Government shall be funded, those that are not shall be funded continuously for another 30 days, 60 days, up to September 30, anything they want to do. That is all they have to do. And it will pass here overwhelmingly. It will pass the Senate and the President will sign it and we can get out of here. But, no, not the way they are going to do it. It is lunacy.

What they are going to do is come up here with something nobody has seen. I doubt if one Member that is sitting here from the other party can tell me what is in that resolution. The gentleman from Michigan, can you tell me? No. The other gentleman from Michigan? No. None of them can. They cannot tell us. They do not know what is in it. I will yield to them. I want them to tell me what is in that continuing resolution.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. VOLKMER. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I wanted you to know, it is not totally perfected yet. It is a continuing resolution. My understanding is it will go to March 15. It takes those appropriation bills the President has vetoed. It reinstates some of that funding to give the President another chance to keep Government open. It takes targeted legislation at appropriations that are going to extend all the way through the rest of this fiscal year.

Mr. VOLKMER. Do you know the ones that are being targeted and the ones that are not being targeted?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I think the argument is still going on, including Democrats in that argument, but the fact is, no, I do not know the final resolution of that bill.

Mr. VOLKMER. None of us know.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. VOLKMER. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I serve on the Committee on Appropriations, and I have been to quite a few meetings. When were these appropriations bills due?

Mr. VOLKMER. They were due to be done by September 30. We all know that. The American public does not know. They think that we as Democrats have had something to do with the closing of the Federal Government. We do not have anything to do with it. We cannot write the legislation. It is only those Republican members who can do it.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, there was a rumor out earlier today, they seem to persist around here, that they were on the 30th resolution of this CR and had not come up with one that is acceptable even for the Republican Party.

Mr. VOLKMER. The 30th draft.

Mr. HEFNER. Hopefully we will get there when we get to—

Mr. VOLKMER. I would just like to mention one other thing, folks, that is going on here that they are planning to do, this great majority that is running this Congress. They cannot get a dang thing done. I could use a harder word but it is not permissible on the House floor.

They did not do anything the first session. You can look at the total bills that they passed. It is the worst record since 1933. Do you know what these, I do not know what you call them, people are proposing to do today? They are going to finally bring in something here that asks us to vote for it, which we have never seen, and then they are going to say, OK, bye-bye, we are going.

They are going to send it to the Senate. They do not know what the Senate is going to do with it. And if the Senate does not pass it that way, because it has to be done that way, you cannot change one t in it, one i in it, one pe-

riod in it. If they do not take it, then the Government closes down. They are not going to stay here to wait and see if they can work something out with the Senate. No, they want to leave here. Get out of here.

I say stay here, stay here until we make sure that the Senate does it. And if the Senate does not do it, we work it out with the Senate. And then after it is all worked out and we know if it takes until tomorrow we know then that the Federal Government is going to continue to operate, then we do it.

But the way you are proposing to do it, you are saying to the Senate, take it or leave it. I do not think the Senate is going to do that.

BUDGET IMPASSE

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I also say, let us stay here, let us resolve the issue. It seems to me that again we need a review of what is happening with this budget process.

The Democrats criticize the Republicans for probably biting off more than they can chew in terms of spending cuts. As it turned out, those Democrats were probably right. We had a lot of ideas that we wanted to accomplish to bring spending under control. But, Mr. Speaker, I say to the American citizens, wake up, America.

Anybody under 50 years old better start putting in some studying time on what is happening to this Federal budget, what is happening to overspending, overtaxing and overborrowing, because it is going to affect your lives. It is going to affect your kids' lives. We have now mounted a huge Federal debt of \$4.9 trillion, plus the extra \$100 billion that Secretary Rubin has creatively come up with that is no less an obligation of this country to pay back.

We are looking at a situation now where we have made such huge promises in social programs that we cannot afford to pay for them. Civil service retirement has an unfunded liability or a so-called actuary debt of a half a trillion dollars; Medicare, \$5 trillion actuary debt; Social Security, \$3.2 trillion actuary debt.

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. I yield to the gentleman from North Carolina.

□ 1230

Mr. HEFNER. Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to be argumentative. I will not speak about the CR as such. I want to speak just a minute about the debt limit. I would like to make a point. The gentleman is a man of real intelligence and very well respected here.

On the extension of the debt limit, absolutely we have no choices, it has to be done. We have spent the money in my district, in your district, in 435 dis-

tricts around this country. Every Member of this Congress has something in his district that calls for Federal funds. We have to do that. Why are we making such a production and tying this up? Because it has to be done. It is just like death and taxes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, it is a moral obligation to pay the bills we owe. Why it is reasonable to attach the debt limit to the consideration of an overhaul of spending is because Congress has lost its control over spending for 50 percent of what this Government spends. Those are now on automatic pilot in the so-called welfare and entitlement programs. Those programs are the biggest reason that we need additional debt limit in the future. So it is reasonable to tie these two together.

I mentioned earlier today, Mr. Speaker, in a 1-minute, all of the previous debt limit extensions forcing Presidents to do things that they did not otherwise want to do by increasing taxes. The most recent, of course, was the 1993 bill, where we had the largest tax increase in history, but also George Bush in 1990, where the large tax increase was tied to that debt limit extension.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CHRYSLER].

Mr. CHRYSLER. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the point, the question is really this: Mr. President, why did you not submit the balanced budget that you submitted on January 6 on December 15, and then the Federal Government would not have been shut down? It was available to them since last July, because it was the budget of Senator DASCHLE. We would have been able to keep the Government employees working and we would have kept the Government going.

So whose fault is it that this Government shutdown happened? Clearly, the President could have submitted that budget. Clearly, he could have kept the Government running. Most importantly, he could have kept his word to the American people.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I think it is absolutely correct. The eastern media do not say it, but it takes two to tango. We need to bring both sides to this table. If we are serious about a balanced budget, we can do it. The fact is that it is much easier to say you want a balanced budget than to come up with the spending cuts to do it. It is too easy for the other side to demagog every spending cut, to go to that interest group and say, Look at these mean-spirited Republicans and what they are doing to you.

Mr. Speaker, we have overcommitted ourselves. We are no longer the rich Nation we were. If people under 50 years old want anything left in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the kinds of programs that we should be