

whether we should have family farmers in our future. If it becomes law, we will have large agrifactories from coast to coast, and you will see precious few yard lights on because family farmers will not be able to make a living.

I was going to talk about other economic issues that relate to the same thing—who gets, who gives, who has the power, and who does not. As Mr. Kristol says, “Who are the lords and barons, and what do they get?” I will end where I began with not so much surprise at the message, but at the candor in the article this morning where Mr. Kristol says, “Someone needs to stand up and defend the establishment. In the last couple of weeks there has been too much pseudo-populism, almost too much concern and attention for ‘the people.’”

Mr. Kristol has not served in the House or the Senate, but the people control the House and the Senate. This is their Chamber; it is their body. They, by their election, determine who serves here. I guess maybe some people, who have not run for county sheriff or Congress, for that matter, probably sometimes dismiss the interests of the people.

There is a desk here that I was assigned to the first day I came to the Senate, and I have since been reassigned. It was temporary. I opened the drawer and, as is the custom, deep in the drawers, in the history of the Senate, everyone carves their names in the desk. That is not a practice we recommend to schoolchildren, but the history is that we do that. The desk that I was assigned to the first day I was here indicates that Harry Truman carved his name in the desk. A desk I was assigned to later says that Warren Harding sat in that desk. He later became President. Below his name is the name of one of the great populists in this country, Robert La Follette from Wisconsin. He understood about economic power. He understood about the people, and he would understand when I express enormous surprise that there is anyone who comments on, is interested in, or is involved in politics, who believes that there is too much concern and attention being paid to the people in our political campaigns.

Frankly, there is not enough concern and attention being paid to the center issues that affect people, who, every day, are trying to figure out how do we get a good education, how do we afford decent health care, how do we find a good job that pays well, how do we find a company to work for that will value and trust us and keep us and appreciate our work? Those are the center concerns of a lot of people in this country, who believe that over two centuries of growth, through innovation and through hard work, America has succeeded beyond the dreams of most when you look at two centuries; but who also believe that the best days in this country are still ahead of us, if its best days are consigned to the interests of the people in this country, who still

have the opportunity to control its direction and still have the opportunity to tell us what they think is important and what they think will make America a better country in which to live.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] is recognized.

ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, when I first came to the Senate, President Reagan surprised everybody in his State of the Union Message when he referred quite often to Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy, using them as examples of good Government. President Bush followed. In his State of the Union Messages he constantly referred to the Democratic Presidents including, of course, Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy.

Mr. President, it appears in the primary battles that are going on in the Republican Party at this time to pick their nominee for the President of the United States they have been studying the Democrats probably a little too literally. It seems they have studied so hard that their primaries are now being conducted like ours used to be conducted. They are going to wind up, it appears, with their nominee chopped and beaten, I guess comparable to a McGovern or a Mondale.

Mr. President, the primary process that we have heard debated and watched debated has been one where there has been nothing but negativism. It is not what they can do. It is how much they can berate each other generally and the Government.

I think we should talk about how good things are rather than how bad things are, because I truly believe we are doing very well as a country. Now, when we say “doing well,” that does not mean we do not have a long way to go; we have a long way to go to become better, but we are doing extremely well.

We need to improve, of course, on our immigration policies. There is a lot of improvement that can be made there. And the trade policy.

As an example, I did not vote for NAFTA; I did not vote for GATT, but I hope they work. I do not come in the Chamber and berate what is going on as a result of NAFTA and GATT. I hope they work. Even though I do not think it was right to pass NAFTA, I do not think it benefits me or my country to continually stand up and say how bad things are and it is all a direct result of NAFTA. I do not believe that is the case. I believe we have some problems with our trade. They are not all related to NAFTA and GATT.

We need to do better with crime fighting, especially, Mr. President, with juvenile crime.

Let us talk about how well we are doing. Last year was the third year in a row where we had a declining deficit. It did not decline enough each year,

but it declined. For the first time in 40 years we had 3 years in a row with a declining deficit. We should talk about that. That is good. That does not take away from the fact that we should have a balanced budget. We can do that. But let us talk about what we have accomplished that has been positive.

New jobs, about 8 million new jobs in the last 3 years. That is good. Let us talk about it. That is important. Lowest inflation, lowest unemployment in well over 30 years. Economic growth has not been so high since the days of Kennedy and Johnson. Corporate profits have never been higher. A couple times in the history of this country they have been as high but never any higher.

We have heard speeches for years about how big Government is, but it was not until this administration that something was done about it. We now have 200,000 fewer civilian employees than we had 3 years ago. That is important, and that is good. We should talk about it. Government is smaller than it used to be. It is now at about the same level it was during the days of John Kennedy, even though the country has grown significantly. Consumer prices rose 2.5 percent last year, the second smallest increase in three decades. That is good. We should talk about it. It is important. Stock prices benefiting from strong corporate earnings growth and low long-term interest rates have risen almost 75 percent during the last 3 years. Good does not mean good enough, but let us talk. It is still good.

During the last 3 years, over 16,000 pages of obsolete regulations have been eliminated, part of Vice President GORE's reinventing Government, and also as a result of Vice President GORE's reinventing Government we have 200,000 fewer Government jobs than we had when he became Vice President. We have more new small businesses. A record number of new small businesses have been created since the start of this administration. Home ownership is at its highest level in 15 years. And also even though we can do better with trade, the United States beat Japan and every other country in the world in the last 2 years in the production of automobiles, the first time that has happened since the 1970's. That is good and we should talk about it.

Education. Fewer students are dropping out of high school. In fact, since 1991, the dropout rate has fallen by 16 percent. That is staggeringly good. Welfare rolls are down since March 1994 by 8 percent—not down enough. We still need welfare reform. It is broken and needs fixing, but let us talk about some of the good things that are happening in our country as we speak.

The misery index. The combined rate of unemployment and inflation is at its lowest levels since the 1960's. It sounds pretty good to me. And I wish those Presidential candidates would talk about that, would talk about how good things are in America today.

What the people running for President should be talking about, for example, is health care. Thousands and thousands of new people each month are saying, "I have no health insurance." Businesses more and more each day are saying, "We do not supply our employees health insurance." Health care costs are still skyrocketing. Health care costs this year alone will go up \$1 billion. We need to have candidates talking about health care reform.

Minimum wage. We need to talk about raising the minimum wage. It is not a bunch of people, the stereotypical teenagers flipping hamburgers at McDonald's. The fact is that 60 percent of the people who receive the minimum wage are women. For 40 percent of those people, that is the only money they get for them and their family. The minimum wage needs to be increased. If it was good when we adopted it in the Depression years, it is good today and we should do what we can as a Congress to make sure it maintains its rate in keeping with inflation.

The environment. I have not heard a single candidate on the Republican ticket running for President talk about the environment. They are in that beautiful area of New Hampshire. I have never been to New Hampshire but the pictures are beautiful. I would love to go there and see that State. On television, you think of the pristine environment. We need to be talking about the environment. The only thing we have seen especially from the other body this past year is to roll back the environmental laws—22 riders on 1 appropriations bill to roll back environmental regulations. People in that body want to wipe out the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, wipe out the endangered species law. They should be talking in a positive sense about what we can do to improve the environment.

I repeat. What I have talked about has been good. It does not mean it is good enough, but it means it is good. Let us give our constituents, let us give the people of America the positive spin. We are doing fine. Let us have these candidates talk about senior citizens and Medicare and not hear the nonsense that we are not cutting Medicare; we are only cutting the rate of increase, without leveling with the American people and saying, of course, we have to maintain an increase in funding for Medicare because thousands of new people are coming on the rolls every day. Medical costs are rising out of the roof. Of course, we have to increase spending for Medicare. It does not mean we do not need to do some work to make it a better system, but we need not decimate it. We do not need to have it wither on the vine as the leader in the other body says that it should.

Education, let us talk about education in a positive sense instead of what we are seeing happen this past year. We are seeing programs that I believe are good programs like School-to-

Work—only 25 percent of the kids who graduate from high school graduate from college. What do we do about the other 75 percent? We have one way of helping. That is our School-To-Work Program which is a fine program that deals with that 75 percent and involves local businesses. In the State of Nevada, we have a wonderful School-to-Work Program. But what are they doing in the other body? They want to wipe it out, and in fact that is what we have. It has been wiped out.

What about our Goals 2000? In Nevada, we have set our Goals 2000. They are led by the First Lady of Nevada, Sandy Miller. About a month ago in Nevada they published their goals for the year 2000, good goals dealing with literacy, math education, reading, but it is being wiped out by this Congress. That is unfortunate. It is unfair to kids.

Crime. Crime is staggeringly bad in this country, but let us talk even there about the fact that the crime rate is declining with the number of murders reported dropping by 12 percent, robberies down 10 percent, car theft down 5 percent. As a result of the Brady bill, more than 45,000 fugitives and felons have been blocked from buying handguns. We have more cops on the street, about 30,000 across the country, over 150 in the State of Nevada. It has helped. Now, where we are failing—I have no problem discussing this—is with juvenile crime. It is becoming more violent, more vicious, and more random. We need to do something about that. But let us even talk on a positive note there about the President's State of the Union message where he said he was going to ask the head of the FBI to focus on juvenile crime, on gangs. That is important.

There is where the discussions should come. Let us talk positively. Let us talk about how well we are doing and how much better we can do.

Mr. President, there was an article recently by Daniel Gross that I assume ran in a number of different newspapers around the country. One of the things he said, and I quote, was:

The wealthy would be well served to also recall that the three most dramatic investment events of this century—the panic of 1907 and the crashes of 1929 and 1987—all took place in the watch of Republican Chief Executives.

The two worst Presidencies for stocks were those of Republicans Herbert Hoover, under whom the Dow fell an appalling 75 percent, and Richard Nixon. Between November 1968 and August 1974 the market fell 18 percent. Factor in the high inflation of the early 1970s, and the loss becomes a 6.9 percent annual rout.

Mr. President, I close by saying I think it is extremely important that the primaries, as they develop, be ones that the candidates focus more on the positive, talk about what is good that is happening in the country; and then on a positive note talk about how much better we can be, rather than the continual harangue we hear about how bad things are and how, in effect, the

future looks bleak. I do not believe that. I think we are as good as our past. And our past has been good.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Thursday, February 22, the Federal debt stood at \$4,987,959,914,205.44, about \$13 billion shy of the \$5 trillion mark, which the Federal debt will exceed in a few months.

On a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$18,932.73 as his or her share of that debt.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The following enrolled bill, previously signed by the Speaker pro tempore of the House (Mrs. MORELLA), was signed on today, February 23, 1996, by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND):

H.R. 1718. An act to designate the United States Courthouse located at 197 South Main Street in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, as the "Max Rosen United States Courthouse."

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BURNS:

S. 1571. A bill to provide for the exchange of certain lands within the State of Montana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DEWINE (for himself and Mr. LUGAR):

S. 1572. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to provide funds and incentives for closures of rail-highway crossings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. D'AMATO:

S. 1573. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish and provide a checkoff for a Breast and Prostate Cancer Research Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BURNS:

S. 1571. A bill to provide for the exchange of certain lands within the