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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, who calls strategic leaders to shape history, we pray for the women and men of this Senate. Once again, today, may they feel awe and wonder that You have chosen them through the voice of Your people. May they live this day humbly on the knees of their hearts, honestly admitting their human inadequacy and gratefully acknowledging Your power. Dwell in the secret places of their hearts to give them inner peace and security. Help them in their offices, with their staffs, in committee meetings, and when they are here together in this sacred, historic Chamber. Remind them of their accountability to You for all they say and do. Reveal Yourself to them. Be the unseen friend beside them in every changing circumstance. Give them a fresh experience of Your palpable and powerful spirit. Banish weariness and worry, discouragement and disillusionment. Often today may we all hear Your voice saying, "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." Lord, help us to rest in You and receive the incredible resiliency You provide. Thank You in advance for a truly productive day. In the name of our Lord. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able majority leader, Senator DOLE, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, there will be a period for morning business until the hour of 1 p.m. We will not have any rollcall votes during today's session. I

am not anticipating any rollcall votes for the remainder of the week. If a rollcall vote becomes necessary, ample notification will be given to all Members.

We will, obviously, turn to any matters we can clear by unanimous consent on the Legislative Calendar. There will be a continuing resolution coming over from the House on, I believe, Wednesday of this week, and it is my hope that we can dispose of that by consent. If not, we would have to give Members at least 24 hours' notice on each side. I am not certain how many Members plan to be in town this week. Many are back in their States doing official business. But the continuing resolution expires Friday, January 26. Therefore, we need to act on it before that date.

It is also my understanding that the Presiding Officer would like to bring up this week the conference report on the Defense authorization bill. Again, it is our hope that if that does come up, as I understand it, it now has bipartisan support. The conference report has been signed by Senators NUNN and KENNEDY on that side and by all the Republican conferees, as I understand it. It is our hope that if that comes up, it can be done by consent. If not, we would either have to postpone that vote or give our colleagues notice, because we have indicated we would do that, and we will follow through on that.

THE SENATE RETURNS TO SESSION

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, we do return to session today ending a recess that began on January 10. Much of what has occurred across America these past 12 days has to do with the weather. I know all Senators join me in saying that our thoughts and prayers are with all those who were victims of "The Blizzard of '96." One of the hardest hit States was Pennsylvania. I saw Governor Ridge on television this

morning expressing his concern that the Federal Emergency Management Administration has not been as helpful as Pennsylvania had hoped. I understand that is being worked out. I hope it is, and I hope FEMA does their usual good job, as they have in the past. We will follow that closely.

I would expect that once Federal officials look at the devastation caused by the flooding, they will provide the necessary assistance. I know the Senate stands ready to work with our Governors and with the President to ensure that that occurs as quickly as possible.

Not only was much of America frozen this past week and a half, but so, too, were the negotiations for a balanced budget. We do have from the President, finally, a certified CBO balanced budget. But I must say to my colleagues that, unfortunately, if you take a close look at that budget—and I commend the President for submitting it—much of the savings do not take place until the next century. This is 1996. If the President were reelected, he would be long gone before most of the savings in the discretionary spending occur. Ninety-five percent of the savings in the President's proposal in discretionary spending occur in the last 2 years, 2001, 2002.

We were concerned about our budget because we think ours is a little bit backloaded, but I do not believe, knowing the Congress as I do, that it would be possible for the appropriators to do that much cutting in the final 2 years. Ninety-five percent of \$295 billion would have to be done in the last 2 years.

So it seems to me that there is still some glimmer of hope that we might come together on a balanced budget agreement. It is not that we have not

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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tried. We have spent over 50 hours and, as far as I am concerned, everyone was there in good faith. The discussions were long, frank, and candid. In fact, I read about a lot of them in the Washington Post. If I had missed all the meetings, I would have known all about them because they were fairly accurate renditions of what happened. It was in four installments. It did not have everything in there, but almost.

I think the basic problem is just this fundamental difference we have on each side of the aisle on the role of Government and giving power back to the States, letting the Governors and legislatures, whether it is on welfare or Medicaid, make the decisions, and whether or not we should have tax cuts for families with children—not for the rich, but for families with children. I must say, in that area both the President and the Republicans have a tax credit. So it is not that we think tax credits are bad. We cap ours. The President caps his. We are trying to get the package together. We also know we are not going to be successful unless we deal with entitlements. Everybody will recognize, including the entitlement commission, which was chaired by Senator KERREY of Nebraska and Senator Danforth of Missouri, who recognized that entitlements were out of hand and needed to be addressed. If we do not do something to preserve and strengthen Medicare, it is going to be in real trouble in a few years.

So if there is movement—again, I say this without any criticism—I think the movement has to come from the President. We have indicated many, many times that we have moved substantially on the Republican side, whether it was on Medicare or Medicaid, or whether it was the earned income tax credit, or whether it was tax reductions. All those four programs we put in a little box and we have indicated how much we have come in the President's direction and how little he has come in our direction.

So if there is to be an agreement—and I say it as fairly as I can—I think the President needs to make a response. Until that happens, I do not see any real reason to sit down for additional meetings. There is still an opportunity and still some glimmer of hope, as I said.

With reference to the continuing resolution, which is currently funding Government, it does expire at the end of this week. I do not find much support, as I travel around the country, for another Government shutdown. We can point our fingers at the President for vetoing three major appropriations bills, which would have put nearly every one of the workers back to work. He can point his finger at us saying we permitted the Government to shut down.

I think the American people really do not understand. They do not like it. I know the Federal employees do not like it, and others do not know why we pay people for not working, although

in this case the Federal employees were willing workers and were prepared to go to work.

Our response this week is clear: Keep faith with our principles and keep our word to the American people and also to keep faith with Federal employees who should not be the pawns in this game, I think, as the Washington Post said in an editorial 2, 3, or 4 weeks ago.

That is what we have coming up this week. The President will address the Congress and the American people tomorrow night on the State of the Union. I think I will respond to that. I think that will happen.

Then, as far as I know, if we can work it out, there will be no votes the remainder of the week. We will let Members know on each side. I will discuss this with the Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE. Then we will also outline plans for the next week and the week after that as we go into February.

PROVIDING FOR THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Concurrent Resolution 39, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAMS). The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 39) providing for the State of the Union Address by the President of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the concurrent resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the concurrent resolution.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 39) was agreed to, as follows:

S. CON. RES. 39

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 23, 1996, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

Mr. DOLE. I move to reconsider that motion, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 1 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

AGRICULTURE CONCERNS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, one of the things that I learned when I was back in my State was that there is serious concern in the agriculture community about the failure to have a farm bill in place before this new crop season begins.

Already, farmers are having to make decisions about the kinds of activity that they will pursue on their lands this year, and without the guidance of the provisions as to agriculture programs from the Government, a lot are put in a position of having to guess and to simply operate on the basis of faith in the fact that Government might come to some agreement on agriculture programs sometime this crop year.

It was one of the casualties of the veto by the President of the Balanced Budget Act that we do not have in place now commodity programs to guide our agriculture producers in making their decisions. Lenders are reluctant to make loans for funds to begin the operations of this crop year without that same kind of certainty, as well.

What I am suggesting is that another high priority for legislative action, as soon as possible, in addition to the conference report on the defense authorization bill mentioned by our majority leader, is action on a farm bill, or action that will put in place some temporary arrangement for income protection, the other provisions that are usually found in commodity programs in the Agriculture Act.

One suggestion that I know is being discussed today among House and Senate Members is whether or not this continuing resolution that could come over from the House include provisions of the Balanced Budget Act as they pertain to the agriculture programs. That is something that is being discussed.

I do not know how that will come out in terms of trying to get bipartisan agreement. I support that. We have passed that twice now in the House and in the Senate. It was part of the Balanced Budget Act sent to the President. I hope we can come to some resolution of this. I urge the Senate and particularly those on our Committee on Agriculture to weigh in with their thoughts and advice and counsel on this subject so we can reach a decision at the earliest possible time.

We will put at risk, Mr. President, a lot of farmers all over the country—not just in my State but all over the country—who do not know what the program is going to be. Is there going to be a program? The Secretary says he will implement himself a rice program if no action is taken by the Congress. In my State, that is an important commodity. What is the program going to be? We do not know.

I think it is an obligation, and it would be a very serious act of irresponsibility if this Congress does not soon settle on a farm program for this crop