

the Journal of proceedings be deemed approved to date, no resolutions come over under the rule, the call of the calendar be dispensed with, and the morning hour be deemed to have expired, and there then be 30 minutes equally divided for closing remarks prior to the 10 a.m., cloture vote relative to the White House travel bill.

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

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, there will be a 10 a.m., cloture vote on the White House travel bill. I ask unanimous consent that Senators have until 10 a.m., to file second-degree amendments under the provisions of Rule XXII.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, following the cloture vote, if not invoked, it may be the majority leader's intention to turn to any of the other following items, so we could expect votes tomorrow. We have the repeal of the gas tax, the taxpayer bill of rights, the minimum wage legislation, and the TEAM Act.

I guess we were unable to reach an agreement today, but it seems to me we should repeal the gas tax, settle the minimum wage dispute, all in one fell swoop. Hopefully that can be resolved.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DOLE. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that after the remarks by the distinguished Senator from Arkansas, Senator BUMPERS, the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order.

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

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. I thank the majority leader for allowing me to just make a few remarks before we go out.

THE GAS TAX CUT

Mr. BUMPERS. Madam President, I want to again reiterate my strong opposition to the so-called gas tax cut. I have labored on the Energy Committee for 21 years and 4 months. An awful lot of that time has been spent preaching about conservation and how we must achieve some degree of energy independence.

It has not been too long since cars were lined up at the service stations. Getting their gas tanks filled was a 1 to 2 hour proposition. How soon we forget. There were cries then that we ought to raise the gasoline tax by as much as \$1 per gallon. I was never for that. The reason I was never for it is because people in my State, which is mainly rural, have to drive many miles

to go to work and do errands. In a rural State people drive from their homes to work in communities 25 miles away. That is a 50-mile-a-day commute. A 50-mile commute a day with a \$1 per gallon gasoline tax adds up to a staggering burden on middle- and low-income workers.

I have, however, always been a strong champion of fuel efficiency. The first year I was in the Senate under the leadership of Scoop Jackson, who was chairman of the Energy Committee, we forced the American automobile industry to achieve fuel efficiency standards, which they did not want to do. At that point, it was already apparent to anybody who watched that the American people had become rather captivated by small Japanese-made automobiles that were getting 35 to 50 miles a gallon. The automobile industry assured Senator Jackson and other Members of the Senate that requiring them to achieve some kind of a national fuel miles-per-gallon fuel standard would be disastrous for them.

In truth the car companies were wrong. We imposed Corporate Average Fuel Economy [CAFE] standards on the automobile industry. We told them that by 1985 they had to achieve an average national fuel efficiency standard of 27.5 miles per gallon per fleet. At that time in this country, the national average of all vehicles on the road, and that was roughly 30 million fewer cars than we have now, was a little over 13 miles per gallon.

You did not have to be a rocket scientist to know if we were using 6½ million barrels of gasoline a day that if you could improve fuel efficiency like that, with a snap of a finger, by one-third, you could have cut the import of oil into this country by 2 million barrels a day. At that time, the United States was producing between 60 percent and 65 percent of its own needs. Just parenthetically, today we produce about 50 percent and we import the rest. It is easily the single biggest contributor to our trade deficit.

In the 1980's we also raised the gas tax. The Federal gas tax had been 4 cents for a very long time. The tax was raised twice in the 1980's and twice again in the 1990's. Today it is 18.3 cents a gallon. In the past, we have always put gasoline taxes into the transportation trust funds to be used for building highways and for mass transit.

In the summer of 1993, as we labored in this body to honor a commitment that the President had made during his campaign that he would cut the deficit in half during his 4-year term, he sent a proposal to the U.S. Congress. He said if you adopt this proposal it will reduce the deficit by \$500 billion over the next 5 years. We have done this precisely the way the people around the coffee shops say they want it done—\$250 billion in new taxes, \$250 billion in spending cuts.

How often have you heard people say, "I would not mind paying more taxes

but they will just spend the money." Believe you me, there has always been enough action taken around here to give credence to that idea. Every poll shows the American people would opt for a plan if it cuts spending dollar for dollar against tax increases. So we raised income taxes on the wealthiest of Americans and we raised the gasoline tax by 4.3 cents a gallon.

What was that 4.3 cents per gallon tax worth? Over a 5-year-period it was worth \$24.5 billion. That total package was worth \$500 billion over a 5-year period, so we said.

In fact, Madam President, as of this moment, it is headed toward being \$700 billion in deficit reduction. How did we pass it? At that time what some of us like to refer to as the "good old days," we had 56 Democratic Senators, 6 voted no, 50 voted aye, and Vice President ALBERT GORE sat in that chair and voted to break the tie of 50-50, and we passed that deficit reduction package, which included this 4.3-cent a gallon gas tax.

Now we are back, and everyone wants to balance the budget. The American people have issued a nonnegotiable demand that they want the budget balanced. I happen to believe that any time the American people speak almost with one voice, they are heard here. So this body for the first time since I have been in the Senate has gotten serious about the business of balancing the budget.

Let me digress to say this, Madam President. The Presiding Officer is a member of the Republican Party. I am a Democrat. There are 53 Republicans sitting on the other side and there are 47 Democrats sitting on this side. In truth, this ought to be pleasing to the ears of the American people. We would all agree on about 90 percent of what we believe to be the core values of this country. Madam President, 90 percent of the core values that have made us a great Nation. And we are, make no mistake about it.

One of the values that every Democrat and every Republican and virtually everybody in the country would agree on is we should balance our budget. Where did we diverge? A couple of my very good friends on this side of the aisle are no longer here, and they are no longer here because they had the courage to be one of the 50 to vote for honest-to-God deficit reduction. If we had not done that, we would be looking at a \$290 to \$300 billion deficit today. One of the reasons the American people are feeling slightly better is that this year the deficit is going to be \$144 billion—less than half what it was projected to be and less than half what it would have been if a few people had not screwed up their nerve and been courageous enough to vote for something that was obviously unpopular. Nobody wants to vote for a tax increase of any kind. I wish I could just wave a wand and vote to repeal the 4.3-cent gas tax and say, "Well, we will take care of the deficit some other way."

Madam President, this is the first time we have attempted to undo any portion of that deficit reduction package of 1993. I am opposed to it because I lost two good friends who were courageous enough to vote for it. I am opposed to it on energy efficiency grounds, and I am opposed to it because you cannot balance the budget and keep giving away the Treasury.

It is really slightly hypocritical to ask the people of this place to repeal the 4.3-cent gasoline tax which will cost us, just for the remainder of this year of 1996, about \$3 billion? If we take the 4.3 cents tax off for the ensuing 7 years, you are talking about \$32 billion.

Where are you going to get the money to offset that? The majority leader in the House of Representatives said, "Well, let us take it out of education. We are not getting a very good bang for the buck on our money for education. We will take it out of education."

Madam President, the rules of the Senate do not permit me to say what I really would like to say about that. But needless to say, that is a crazy idea.

Somebody else has said, "Well, we are getting ready to impose a tax on the banks and S&L's to go under the so-called SAIF to pay off the bonds that we issued to bail the S&L's out. So we will just take it out of the savings and loan insurance fund.

You think about that one. We are going to reduce the gas tax 4.3 cents a gallon and make it up by charging the same amount to people of this country because they have deposits in the bank. That is passed on to the consumer one way or another. If we make the banks and the S&L's pay more into the insurance fund, they will pass it on to the customers. So if you say, "Well, we will take the gas tax off, but we will pick it up over here in the bank fund," I do not consider that the most enlightened solution either.

Madam President, 3 weeks ago the price of oil was \$24 a barrel. Yesterday it was \$21 a barrel—12.5 percent less

than it was 3 weeks ago. It takes a while before that reduced price of oil works its way through the pipeline, and the consumers get the benefit of it. But the Energy Information Administration says by October the price of oil will be \$17 a barrel.

I wish to goodness we could get this Presidential election over with so we could start talking seriously about things that really matter instead of playing around with things like this for whatever political impact they might have in November.

Madam President, how are we going to tell the American people that their gasoline prices are going to go down 4.3 cents a gallon? Answer. We are not, because we do not have any way of knowing that. The oil companies can put that 4.3 cents a gallon in their pocket.

But more to the point, how do we make up the \$3 billion we are going to lose? Nobody has said yet anything credible. No credible offer has been made as to how we are going to offset it. I frankly think the politics of this thing is not on the side of the proponents.

Yesterday, I had 150 people in a committee room over in the Dirksen Building, members of the chamber of commerce from my State. They were all here for their big national shindig. So for openers I just asked, "How many people here would like to repeal the 4.3 cents per gallon gas tax?" This is the chamber of commerce; these are business people normally who dislike taxes intensely. I did not embellish. I did not try to argue one way or the other. I just asked the question point blank. Five people. "How many would like to leave the gas tax alone?" Roughly 70 to 90 voted to leave it alone.

Today, the rural cooperatives were in town. I heard the distinguished Senator from North Dakota today say that farmers use six to seven times as much gasoline as the ordinary driver uses. There must have been about 75 people at the meeting today. "How many of you would like to repeal the 4.3-cent gas tax?" Three. All the rest were opposed.

So for all of the reasons I have enumerated plus others—and I will not take additional time, Madam President, because we are ready to shut this operation down for the night, but for all of those reasons and many more, the repeal of the 4.3-cents-per-gallon gas tax is a foolish idea.

And I am not going to vote for a constitutional amendment to balance the budget, which is an equally foolish idea. So many people in this body treat the Constitution like it is a rough draft that they are supposed to finish up somehow or other.

Everybody wants to amend the Constitution. I do not. I have only voted for one amendment, and I intend to think twice before voting for another amendment. I do not like a lot of the Members of this body tampering with what Madison and Adams, Hamilton and Franklin did 207 years ago.

Madam President, if we ever debate this gasoline tax, which I understood we were going to take up today, I will be back in the Chamber largely repeating what I just said plus some additional things. But I can tell you the American people are not behind this. They do not want it. If you want to do something to please the American people, get the budget balanced. Do not be tinkering around with the politics of the 4.3-cent gasoline tax. And above all, do not ask me to vote to undo the deficit reduction we have going which has been successful to a staggering degree. We should not start unraveling it now because there is a Presidential election in November.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:02 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 8, 1996, at 9:30 a.m.