

B-2 bombers. But let us have that debate. Even within the Defense Department, whether or not we need to move ahead with some of the other new weapon systems or if they can be delayed. We live in a relatively safe world. I do not want to cut defense irrationally, but on the other hand I do not think any area of the budget should just be rubber-stamped by this Congress. As I say, we have got to set priorities and clearly at this point in time one of those priorities has to be people who are hurting in disaster areas such as northwest Minnesota.

Mr. NEUMANN. We are nearing the end of the hour that we have reserved to us this evening and I thought I would bring the discussion kind of back to where we started, and that is this picture that shows the growing debt facing this Nation of ours and maybe talk a little bit about an issue that is very important, that is probably not now coming to the floor of the House but we hope it does in the future, and that is the balanced budget amendment. I have had a lot of people in our town hall meetings again asking me the question, "Do we really need the balanced budget amendment?" I have been asking those people back when they ask me that question, I just point to this chart and point to the growing debt, and then I ask them, if we did manage to get to a balanced budget in 2002 and let us be optimistic and say we got to a balanced budget without using the Social Security trust fund money, we got Washington to stop spending the Social Security trust fund money, we got the job done. Do you really think that in 2003 they would balance the budget again? Or do you think we would go back to our old ways? And even if we managed to do it in 2002 and 2003, how long would it take before they went back to their old ways of this growing debt?

That is why a balanced budget amendment that has failed by one vote three times in the Senate of the United States is so important. I hope on the other side they decide to bring it back again and get another vote on it so that we have what Wisconsin already has in its constitution, a requirement that we do not spend more money than we have. It is not about a balanced budget. It is about our children's future and whether or not they can hope to have a future in this great Nation of ours. Without a balanced budget amendment even if we manage to get the job done by 2002, we have those after years, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, and so on to worry about. Fixing the problem temporarily by 2002 is not going to solve the long-term problem without the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. As I have said before, and one of the things I really like about the budget plans that the gentleman and I have worked on, and frankly the gentleman from Wisconsin has done a lot more of the work than I have, but as a famous architect from

Chicago said, "Make no small plans." I think we need a big vision, and I think the vision should not be just to balance the budget by the year 2002. I think the real vision and the real goal ought to be to pay off that national debt. As the gentleman says, and I certainly agree, I can think of no better thing to leave our kids than a debt-free future. We have an opportunity to do that if we will exercise the discipline this year and every year. As we have said before, balancing the budget is not something you do next year. Balancing the budget is something you do this year. It is something you do every day. That is why as we look at this supplemental appropriation, I hope that the gentleman is successful in the Appropriations Committee to make certain that we set those priorities, that we rearrange some of the budget so that we can take care of those people who are hurting and needing in certain areas of our country and still stay on that glide path to balancing the budget.

Mr. NEUMANN. Would the gentleman not say that is also true of the Social Security issue? The issue where the Federal Government is collecting out of paychecks about \$65 billion more than it is paying back out to seniors and that that money is supposed to be set aside in the savings account but Washington is instead spending that money? Is that not a day-to-day struggle also to prevent Washington from spending that money?

When Washington talks about getting to this balanced budget in 2002, we cannot accept getting to the balanced budget by going into the Social Security trust fund and taking that money out, taking \$104 billion out of the trust fund, putting it in the checkbook. That is not good enough. That is not really a balanced budget. Is that not what this fight is about day to day out here to stop Washington from spending that Social Security money, get us to a balanced budget but do it the right way without using the Social Security trust fund money to get there? Are those not the battles that we are engaged in out here day after day after day in this city?

Mr. GUTKNECHT. We are certainly in a wonderful position. We are given a golden opportunity. We are at relative peace and relative prosperity here in this country. If we cannot balance the budget and save Social Security now, I do not know when we will.

Mr. NEUMANN. I thank the gentleman. I would conclude tonight with a very optimistic picture for the future of this great Nation that we live in. We have it within our grasp, within our means, within our understanding to do what is right for the future of this country. We have laid out a plan that gets us to a balanced budget by 2002, lets the American people keep more of their own hard-earned money, sets aside the Social Security trust fund money that estops Washington from spending the money that is supposed to be in the Social Security trust fund

and at the same time looks past the year 2002 to 2003, 2004 and beyond, looks at paying off the Federal debt so instead of taking \$600 a month from our families of five in America, that instead of doing that to just pay the interest on the Federal debt that we can look at the families keeping that money, using it for education, using it for things that are so important in our families in America today.

We do have a big vision for the future of this great Nation we live in. It includes a balanced budget, it includes protecting and preserving Social Security and fulfilling our commitment to our seniors in Medicare. It includes letting the American people keep more of their own hard-earned money. There is just no reason not to look past that and look to the big picture and say, yes, we can pay off the Federal debt and, yes, we can get to a point where our people do not need to pay \$600 a month to do nothing but pay the interest. Let our families keep that money in their own pockets to spend in the way that they deem most appropriate instead of sending it out to Washington to do nothing but pay the interest on the Federal debt.

I see a very bright future for America because if we manage to implement these sorts of plans, that means the Government is going to quit borrowing the money out of the private sector, leave the money in the private sector. When there is more money in the private sector, that means the interest rates stay down and when the interest rates stay down that is a bright picture because then people can afford to buy houses and cars and all the other things that they do when the interest rates are low, and that means somebody has to build those houses and build those cars and that is job opportunities for the young people in this great Nation that we live in. These are our hopes and dreams for America's future. God bless you all.

□ 1800

RED RIVER VALLEY FLOODS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MICA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from North Dakota [Mr. POMEROY] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, my remarks tonight have nothing to do with political party or political ideology. In fact it has rather to do with something much more basic than that, disaster of an unprecedented character that has inundated the second largest city in the State that I represent, the State of North Dakota, and caused hundreds of millions of dollars of damage up and down the Red River in light of the disastrous floods we continue to experience. During the next few minutes I want to brief my colleagues about what brought this about, what weather circumstances were out there that caused

flooding of this unprecedented character.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my colleagues of the preparations made to fight the flood, because I think it is important that they understand we did not just sit and give way to the river. In fact, this is only the final stages of what had been a heroic several-week period of frantic effort to beat these waters back. I want to tell you, sadly, about how the battle for Grand Forks was lost and how the city has now been totally inundated and the consequences of it. I want to bring you up to date in terms of how people are coping with this disaster and assess finally where we go from here.

First, what brought all this about? Well, this has been one winter for the books in North Dakota. We are used to tough weather, we pride ourselves on it, but this year we had an unbelievable series of first occurrences, more snowfall than ever, worse blizzards than ever, a 50-year storm on April 8, only now not quite 3 weeks ago, dumping more snow on already land that was just buried in snow. We had the first Presidential disaster declaration issued statewide for a snow emergency.

Now very unusual to have a snow emergency, but in this circumstance we literally could not deal with the volumes of snow on our roads that were impeding access, critical access, to medical facilities and the like for the citizens of North Dakota, as you know many scattered about on the farms and remote smaller towns across the State. We needed more help in keeping our access to the facilities, and that is why as we coped with the snow, the Presidential declaration issued statewide had become acquired.

I think that we would have been OK but for the blizzard of nearly 3 weeks ago. The meteorologist tells us that this storm alone was a 50-year event, worst storm in 50 years.

So you take a situation where the land has been saturated with wetfall, covered with more snow than we have ever had in the history of recording snowfall in North Dakota, and add to it the worst blizzard in 50 years, and you had all the elements for a true disaster.

As the snow started to melt, we began to see in the rural areas just what we were up against. This picture shows what we have seen across an awful lot of rural acreage in North Dakota, standing water of flooding proportion and the small tributaries which carried it to the major river arteries also flooding. As the floodwater went from the rural reaches to the larger rivers, the flooding accelerated.

We began with the State really following the blizzard of nearly 3 weeks ago, the April 6 blizzard, in a virtual deep freeze. In fact we had some tragic loss of life due to exposure the second week in April as the State coped with freezing temperatures and power outages. As the weather warmed up, at last, and all the snow melted, the water really started to flood.

Now we thought we were ready for the floods that we knew were to come. The Weather Service had given us early forecasts predicting severe flooding and giving us specific numbers that allowed the Corps of Engineers to begin the work on the dikes for these cities literally weeks earlier than had ever been attempted before. By the time we came into the month of April, millions of dollars had been spent elevating the levees and getting them ready for the flood water that we knew was to come.

General Furman, the head of civil works for the Army Corps of Engineers, surveyed the preparations and indicated that he thought this represented the very best advanced measure work the Corps of Engineers had ever attempted, the best effort to stop cities from flooding represented in weeks of frantic activity, activity including the movement of massive amounts of clay and dirt in earthen levees at the city-wide level and then, as individual homeowners prepared, literally millions of sandbags, an estimated 6 million placed in Grand Forks alone, put in place bag by bag by bag, with the countless hours of hundreds and then thousands of volunteers.

The floods impacted in particular the Red River Valley and caused us the most severe flooding that we have had to deal with, and the Red River is somewhat unique in North Dakota; it flows north. This is an unfortunate character for a river in the north country because you take water in the south and you send it into ice in the north before it is melted, frequently resulting in ice jams and exacerbating the flooding problem. All up the Red River Valley the cities have had problems; Wahpeton having their crest occur literally in the height of that April 6 and 7 blizzard, people enduring ice and snow to place urgently needed sandbags in dikes that were just about to give way. Wahpeton fared relatively well through the flooding crests that they sustained. Unfortunately, their sister city, Breckenridge, MN, did not fare as well, and there have been hundreds of homes flooded in that city.

North flows the river. As the problem eases in Wahpeton, the problem grows for Fargo and Moorhead. Frantic efforts have saved most of those cities, although dozens of homes have been lost in that fight as rural houses could not be protected and as urban ones in some neighborhoods gave way. Urgently constructed secondary dikes prevented much greater flooding in that area.

Coming now to Grand Forks, certainly the greatest loss we have sustained in the flooding, the river running now at 54 feet. That is over a flood stage of 28 feet and over a normal elevation for that river of 16 feet. A river that on a summer day is 16 feet deep is 54 feet deep as it rampages through the neighborhoods of Grand Forks tonight. This is several feet above the forecast. In fact, it is entirely possible that inundation would not have occurred had

we prepared for a height of this magnitude. It is by a factor of several feet the highest flood ever reported in Grand Forks, ND, and they did not have the dikes constructed to the level to deal with it. Frantic and truly heroic efforts made in the final hours of the fight to get the levees up with the rapidly increasing height to the river unfortunately were unsuccessful.

The general river flows in Grand Forks normally run at about 5,000 cubic feet per second which is how they measure river flows. The water flowing by Grand Forks today is 110,000 cubic feet per second, 22 times the normal rate of flow, which gives you a very good idea about the amount of water in the Red River system that is funneling by Grand Forks and inundating that city and threatening two cities to the north, Drayton and Pembina, as the river crests continue to work their way north.

Unfortunately the battle for Grand Forks, as anyone knows who has seen the television footage, was lost. It is a very flat city and the dikes were not capable of being lifted to the final elevations the floodwater required. As the dikes gave way and the streets in the lowest lying parts of town began to be inundated, they flooded also the city's storm sewer system. A storm sewer system very efficiently takes runoff water from city streets to the river when the river is at its normal elevation, but in this flat city when the river is at an elevation that is higher than the city streets, it just as efficiently transfers the water from the river throughout the neighborhoods. That is why only 1 in 10 of the flood victims in North Dakota had flood insurance. The great majority was well outside the 100-year flood plain, but water came charging through the storm sewers and bubbling up through the manhole covers on every corner slowly but surely inundated virtually 90 percent of the city of Grand Forks.

There were some very dangerous periods during the loss of the city of Grand Forks. There were evacuations occurring in the dead of night, people forced to leave their homes with the possessions that they had on their backs in advance of the flooding waters. Others had slightly more time.

I watched the Red River High School serve as an evacuation center, and I will tell you it looked something like you might see out of a war zone. People, evacuees from the city I know so well coming flooding into the school and being routed on to schoolbuses and sent to the shelter at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, all keeping them out of harm's way and the ever-rising waters.

The hospital for the city that had 200 patients, many of them critically ill and in intensive care, had to be evacuated as their water system became polluted. People were med-evac'd to hospitals throughout North Dakota and Minnesota. Fortunately all of that transfer occurred with no loss of life. All of the evacuations occurred with no loss of life.

The University of North Dakota, the largest university in North Dakota, a school of 11,000 forced 3 weeks before the end of the semester to just shut it down. The president of that university indicated to the professors: Give your students the grades they have earned to date or give them incompletes, but we are done with the semester, there will be no commencement, school is out, school is over, get your students out of town.

All of this occurred as the water rose, and the next two charts I would show you go to show you the dimensions, the depths of the water that especially the lower lying parts of town had to contend with, yet again more than 90 percent of the town ended up being inundated.

This is a home that has been in the water a day or two, and as you can see it is literally floating. Houses will float, and so these houses, a number of the houses, will be totally wrecked as they floated off their foundations, as the one in the picture illustrates.

This shows a line of cars, people forced to leave their houses so quickly they could not even get their vehicles, and those vehicles have been bobbing like toy cars and trucks on the streets as the water has so completely inundated them, as you can see.

Just when we thought it could not get any worse it got worse. A fire broke out that ultimately claimed 11 of the major buildings in the downtown intersection. This picture shows the first building to go into flame. They believe the cause of it was broken gas pipes. I talked to a fireman that was down fighting the fire, and he says, you know it is ironic, but a fireman's best friend is water. Water is a critical element we use to control fire. And yet we could not fight this fire because there was too much water, too much water on the street to get our equipment down, and they literally dove under water trying to locate hydrants to hook up their hose, and when they finally did get their equipment moved in rough proximity to the fire, got their hoses hooked up to the hydrants, the city's water system had been so badly damaged that there was no pressure for the water to fight the fire. Ultimately it was fought by air, Forest Service planes dropping a fire retardant on it and a Coast Guard helicopter using a device that was capable of bringing river water over the flame ultimately controlled it again after 11 buildings were lost, buildings including the Grand Forks Herald, the city's newspaper, one of the State's largest newspapers as well as a major bank and other major commercial buildings in downtown.

The devastating aftermath is revealed in the next two pictures I have. You have a city that one person called it a mixture between Venice with the water and Berlin with the charred remnants of buildings. This is the scene today, a scene that has been widely reported in newspapers across the coun-

try and across the world reflecting the extent of the devastation that Grand Forks, ND has had to cope with.

□ 1815

The loss is as comprehensive as it is horrific. I mean, this is a God-awful scene, but just as God-awful is the fact that this disaster has touched virtually everyone in the community. I was there last weekend, and for an example, on a boat ride, as we toured the devastated downtown, the photographer taking pictures said, as we passed the newspaper, I might get a little emotional here. I asked him why in particular. He had lost 25 years of negatives in the fire at the Grand Forks Herald, all of his life's work reflected in his negatives, all of them torched and left without one in that fire.

Later that afternoon I was on a street assessment looking at areas of town that had not yet been evacuated and the determination being made whether or not they needed to be evacuated. The policeman that was with me on that assessment had already lost his home, and the city attorney's home was subject to imminent threat and has now also been inundated. The mayor of Grand Forks, Mayor Pat Owens, a woman who has shown such tremendous character and courage in the face of this disaster had, all the while she maintained her public leadership, faced deep personal challenge. She had a 92-year-old father that she could not get to leave his house even though he was being flooded. He finally agreed to leave when necessary and agreed to take his dogs along. Her own house, aside from worrying about her father, was also lost.

When I flew out Monday morning from Grand Forks, the people at the Northwest Airlines ticket desk were unshaven and unshowered, not surprising, given the fact that there is no water in Grand Forks. They indicated that to a person, the people at the counter had each lost their homes. Their families had been evacuated. But they said it could be worse, we still have employment.

The telephone company is the only operating business in Grand Forks today, and it is operating because it is completely sandbagged. Crews are working around the clock pumping out water and actually using blow dryers to keep the cables dry. Boats bring in supplies to maintain the 24-hour shift.

The Grand Forks Herald, I believe, is a real example of just the courage of this community in coping with the disaster.

Mr. Speaker, the city is presently publishing in a school north of town. The paper is being printed in St. Paul and flown back for distribution in Grand Forks free of charge so that people can track the information, and there is no advertising revenue in these newspapers supporting this city effort.

This column, "The Day That Changed Everything," was literally written by the editor as the newspaper

building burned and destroyed completely that newspaper. The community, being desperate for news, continues to benefit from the heroic efforts of the Grand Forks Herald and its staff, and I really salute them for their effort.

Mr. Speaker, the community response to this disaster has really been overwhelming. The Grand Forks Air Force Base, the major Air Force base 13 miles out of town, has brought resources to bear that have been critical to our getting through this. They took a massive three-bay hangar and turned it over as an evacuation center, housing up to 2,500 evacuees on cots; not very comfortable cots I know, because I slept on one Saturday and Sunday night in that shelter. But the hospitality, the friendliness, the support of encouragement provided by the men and women of the Air Force working at that base was something to behold. They have done a tremendous service and shown what an essential part of our community they truly are.

Families throughout the region, both in North Dakota and the Minnesota side, have phoned into radio stations with the most unbelievable offers you have ever heard on the air: We have a home. We have room, we have a spare room, we will take a family. We have a finished basement. We will offer to house a family for the duration, until they can get back into their home.

Can you imagine in some of the areas of this country people turning their homes open to total strangers for a period of time that is anything but certain, but could literally run weeks, if not more than a month? Well, that is what happened in great number in North Dakota. As a result, the number of people having to spend the entire duration of the evacuation period in that Air Force base has now dropped to under 300 as people find more comfortable shelter with friends, relatives, or these wonderful volunteers taking total strangers into their homes and into their families.

The mayor, I believe, put in perspective what has happened to Grand Forks. She said, we have suffered a disaster. Our hearts are broken, but we will get through this. It could be worse. Property, as difficult as it is to lose precious, lifelong possessions, can be replaced, homes can be rebuilt. But to date, we have come through this disaster without a single loss of life, and life is truly irreplaceable. That record held and held again today in Grand Forks, and let us all hope and pray that that continues to be the case, and we will avoid the ultimate disaster, loss of life, in this flood.

Well, where do we go from here? I will tell my colleagues where we go. We pull together and we build back. The local support has, as I mentioned, been absolutely amazing. And what North Dakotans have seen I think to their amazement over the last several days is the extent of national support

that has been extended. There are innumerable stories I could tell my colleagues, corporate and individuals from across the country reaching out and assisting. AT&T put free phone lines immediately into that shelter, for example. Life USA Today Insurance Co. called me in my office yesterday and said, how can we help? Can we send cash, can we send people up and help clean out? Anything we can do, let us know. The AFL-CIO has contacted me and said, we want to help. We have people that lost everything they have. Do you have ways you could suggest we can help? Money or trade skills as we build back?

I think, making it real personal, something happened in my office this morning that took me by surprise and was incredibly special to me. I saw a fellow I had not seen before, a boy with him. I figured maybe they were from North Dakota visiting the Nation's Capital. But no, they are people that live in the area, and the 7-year-old wrote this note that he wanted me to share with the people of Grand Forks. To the children of Grand Forks:

My family and I survived Hurricane Andrew 5 years ago in Florida, and I know that all of you will triumph over these floods of 1997. Accept these small gifts, and good luck to all of you. Peter Boyce, 7 years old, Jamie Elementary School.

Well, Peter, his father went on to explain, insisted that they pull together some bottled water, took the canned goods they could spare, and they brought them up, two boxes full. And I am under instruction from Peter Boyce to get those to the children of Grand Forks.

That is just a perfect example of how people have reached out. There are 1-800 numbers established, which I do not believe protocol allows me to share with you on the floor. But the Red Cross has an 800 number, and in addition there is a 1-800 number set up through FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. And any of my colleagues that might like to individually provide that kind of support demonstrated by the gesture of Peter Boyce, I would urge you to contact those numbers.

In spite of how touched we are with this national outpouring and the charitable outreach of thousands of Americans across the country, a number that I believe is going to even grow larger, we need the help of the Federal Government. I will tell my colleagues why we need the help of the Federal Government. It is kind of illustrated by a true story that occurred as the dikes were giving way. An engineer for the Corps of Engineers, a very talented woman engineer that had been there for all of the building of the dikes, she was frantically looking at her topography maps, looking for a secondary line of defense against the flooding waters. And she was crying and she said, there is no high ground, there is no high ground.

Well, unfortunately, that is the case in a figurative way with the status of

the city of Grand Forks right now. There was not a part of the community left untouched, nothing to build upon. The financial community, devastated. The university, sent home. The business community, under water and then aflame. We are going to have to completely rebuild this community, and it is going to take all of our help and all of our work.

There have been some wonderful things that have occurred this week. The President came to Grand Forks, ND, and if my colleagues could only have seen what he did for the morale of the people spending the nights in the shelter. He told them: You are not in this alone. We are standing with you. And it meant an awful lot.

The President returned and within 1 day of his return sent to the Congress an amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill requesting an additional \$300 million for relief in the Grand Forks area. The House Committee on Appropriations marked up this morning, a markup that convened 6 days after the dikes breached. They indicated that they also wanted to help and passed \$210 million of relief on the \$488 million that was in the additional relief package, bringing the total, not just for Grand Forks, but for North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota, to \$698 million. The chairman said it right when he announced to his committee members this morning: This is not enough. More will be required, but we are still assessing the damages, and this is a place to start.

Disasters know no partisan lines, and I am very pleased to announce on the floor this evening that Speaker GINGRICH will be visiting Grand Forks, ND, tomorrow, late afternoon, touring the devastation. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], the House majority leader, a North Dakota native himself, will be touring the area on Monday, all to learn more about the extent of the devastation we have experienced and to be prepared to help.

Ultimately, the Federal resources will be a critical part of our rebuilding. But even more critical than that and more fundamental than that is the tough character, the tough and resilient character and the optimism in the face of all odds of the people of North Dakota.

I would close with my comments before yielding briefly to the gentleman from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] who in his State also has suffered a disaster, and he will tell you about it. But I want to close with this story I think reflecting the resilient character of the people of North Dakota.

As I mentioned earlier, I spent Saturday and Sunday night with the evacuees in that Air Force hangar. On Monday morning as I got up to go to the airport, it was about 5:30 in the morning, and in a hangar full of more than 2,000 people you are always going to have some people milling about. Even that early hour I noticed two women about 70 years old walking around. I

went to visit with them a little. I was amazed at how good they looked. Their hair was all fixed, they were presenting themselves very, very well, especially given the fact that they were staying in a hangar and it was 5:30 in the morning. Out of my surprise I said, you look great. And one woman replied: Well, of course; some of these soldiers are really good-looking.

I think that underscores the unquenchable optimism of the people of North Dakota, and with the help of the Federal Government and with the help and prayers of the American people, we will be back and we will be back bigger and better than ever.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend and colleague, a freshman Member who distinguishes himself with his conscientious service to his State of South Dakota, Mr. THUNE.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend and colleague from North Dakota, Mr. POMEROY. I would like to echo many of the sentiments that he has just expressed, because I too have seen what he has seen firsthand. I had the opportunity earlier this week to view the damage in Grand Forks, ND, and it truly looks like a war zone. It is a city that has been utterly decimated. As we flew over it and saw that the entire area was just engulfed and consumed in water and the burned-out buildings, it looked like a scene from a World War II movie.

□ 1830

They have a tremendous challenge ahead of them, and it is one that is going to take all of us working together to see that we get North Dakota and South Dakota back on their feet.

I never thought that I would be saying after the winter and spring we have gone through in South Dakota that we are fortunate, but in this particular case, we are. After having seen what North Dakota is going through, some of our State's problems do not seem quite as big as they once did.

Nevertheless, we have had what has been an unprecedented weather circumstance in our State. Conditions this year truly are historic in the history of the Dakotas. I, too, represent an entire State, like my neighbor to the north, and we are very geographically isolated. We are large States. We are truly accustomed and used to having adverse weather, tough circumstances and conditions to deal with. Yet, this year I think has tested that beyond the limits.

I recall an incident not too long ago, just recently in my State of South Dakota, the city of Watertown, where people were out sandbagging in 30-below wind chills and 60-mile-an-hour winds. That is the kind of season that we have had to contend with.

It is heart-wrenching when you see the stories and witness firsthand the people who have been torn from their homes. My friend, the gentleman from North Dakota, as he mentioned, has spent some time in the relief center

there, and had an opportunity to see again firsthand what people are going through and enduring, the effect, the toll it takes on families.

A few weeks back my wife and I as well had an opportunity to spend some time in the Red Cross Emergency Relief Center in Watertown, SD, and it really is one of those things that you have to experience and see firsthand to have an appreciation for what these people are going through.

I have talked with friends in my State who, as a result of April blizzards, have experienced enormous losses of livestock. It was bad enough during the blizzards during the winter, but then we got a late spring blizzard during calving season. I talked with one friend who has lost 50 calves in calving season, another who has lost 20.

I think it is very important to note that for those of us who live in States like the Dakotas, that is our livelihood. We have an incredible challenge ahead of us to rebuild and to start to recover. Our economies are so dependent upon agriculture, and the cattle losses that we have experienced and much of the crop damage that is going to be caused as a result of not being able to get in the fields and plant, we are going to have a very, I think, difficult task ahead of us. We are going to need help.

That is why it is so important that we work together. We appreciate very much the response we have seen from those at the Federal level, the President visiting North Dakota this last week, and again, the Speaker coming out tomorrow to see North Dakota. The various Federal agencies have responded in a very quick and immediate way, and we want to credit them for the help they have given, and look to them again for assistance.

I think, again, the thing that I would note from all this, and we have seen an historic response, I think, from the Federal Government, we have also witnessed incredible examples of people working together. We have seen tremendous leadership at the local level; the mayor of Grand Forks, the mayor of Watertown, who have stepped up and led. Also our Governors in the States have helped take precautions so we have not lost lives.

We are very blessed, I think, not to have lost lives in this. But there was an incredible, tremendous toll on property, people putting their lives back together. But people have come together and worked the very best in the human spirit, we have witnessed that firsthand. It really speaks well I think to the pioneer, frontier spirit that the people in our State have. Their spirits have been bent but they have not been broken, and we will rebound. We will get back on our feet.

I can recall, again, going back in our history in 1972 with the flood in Rapid City that decimated the entire city, and the rebuilding effort that has been going forward there. It is now an economic wonder. It has become a great

model for cities around the country. The economy is performing well. So Grand Forks I think as well will come back, but it will be a tribute to the leadership that they have there, and again, to the will and spirit of the people in that community and throughout our entire State.

It is a work in progress. We have much that remains to be done. We are very appreciative of the great effort that has been put forward by the administration, the various Federal agencies, our State governments, our local governments, and individuals who have stepped up and been willing to make the sacrifices that are necessary to help our States and some of these communities get back on their feet.

I look forward to working with my colleague, the gentleman from North Dakota, and other members of our delegation in our respective States, and Minnesota as well, and in the Senate, and working with our Governors and the various Federal agencies and through the appropriations process to bring the type of relief and assistance that is necessary.

I think we all realize these are difficult times fiscally, and we have to do these things in a very responsible way. Yet, we also have to recognize that these are truly conditions that have put people in a position where there are things they can do, but others that are just beyond their control. We are going to have to step in and help.

I appreciate my friend, the gentleman from North Dakota, for yielding to me.

Mr. POMEROY. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

Mr. Speaker, this is a floor that sees an awful lot of tough, partisan debate. I think it is very important that our colleagues see tonight that when it really matters, when it is really on the line, like it is for the people that we represent in the context of this disaster, this is a body that can, in a very bipartisan way, step up to the plate and reflect, really, what the American people are thinking, a desire to provide help for people who need help.

Mr. Speaker, there is another North Dakota native in this House. I mentioned earlier that the majority leader is a native of North Dakota. So is the gentleman from Minnesota, JIM RAMSTAD, who very capably represents Minnesota and the Minneapolis area, specifically.

He has been absolutely more genuine and more sincere in his offer of support, just as sincere as he could be. I appreciate all he has done for us already, and look forward to his continued help as we try to get the disaster assistance put into place.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me. I also want to thank my friend, the gentleman from North Dakota, EARL POMEROY, and recognize his efforts; the gentleman from Minnesota, COLLIN PETERSON, who represents the Seventh

District; our colleague, the gentleman from South Dakota, JOHN THUNE; the gentleman from Minnesota, GIL GUTKNECHT, who is from southern Minnesota. For you people, your districts have been most directly impacted by the horrible floods of 1997, and they all have represented their people so well at the time of their greatest need.

I also have never been more proud of the people I represent in the Twin Cities suburban Third District. They have also been there, and they are there, they are going to remain there in support of our friends in North Dakota and South Dakota.

Last weekend there were sandbagging operations around the clock at a correctional facility in Hennepin County there, with inmates working hand in hand with high school students, and 500 people from the Mormon Church and other churches; volunteers coming out to help sandbag and send the sandbags up north; food banks, many food banks helping. There is one I am familiar with, Lake Country Food Bank, Hy Rosen, the executive director. Right now as we speak, I talked to him earlier today, they are loading eight or nine semis of dry food to send up to people in need;

The churches, sending choirs to cheer up the people in these flood-devastated areas;

The schools, young schoolchildren, trying to cheer up other young people who have been so devastated;

Families pitching in, corporations.

My colleague, the gentleman from South Dakota, mentioned several corporations. Northwest Airlines offered free transportation to get emergency supplies up. The State bar association, I know the 16 law firms, major firms in Grand Forks, were wiped out, 8 by the fire, 8 by the flood; everything destroyed, all their books, records, wiped out. Cheryl Ramstad Voss, who happens to be my sister and president-elect of the State bar, she has assembled a group tomorrow in the afternoon of the 50 big law firms in the Twin Cities to get together and help jump start those firms.

The Governors have been tremendous. The National Guard, General Andreotti in Minnesota, the Salvation Army has been there. Also I want to thank FEMA Director James Lee Witt, Jim Franklin, who is the emergency management director in Minnesota, and the local officials; the mayors as well.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take all my 5 minutes, I know there are other speakers. But I just want to conclude by saying that I strongly support the President's call for a \$488 million Federal relief package. One-half is emergency dollars which the President has already committed during his visit, and \$200 million of it depends on a special appropriation from us here in Congress.

We need to continue to work together in a bipartisan way over the next week or two to finish the job of

getting this relief money to those people who so desperately, desperately need it.

I know the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON] from the Committee on Appropriations said yesterday that he expects strong bipartisan support and quick action, and the people of those devastated areas certainly deserve nothing less.

I am also, in conclusion, grateful to the Speaker. I know the gentleman invited him to tour the area to see firsthand how bad it is. I appreciate the invitation to go along with the Speaker. My favorite cousins had to evacuate their homes in Grand Forks. In fact, their daughter and her husband and little baby do not know what they have to come back to. It is in the area that is hard hit. We do not know for sure at this time. But I know the Speaker has made a commitment to support whatever is necessary to get this flood-ravaged area repaired and restored, and to help the people in the short term as well.

We will be there with the full cost of emergency rescue and cleanup. We will be there for the permanent repair and restoration of facilities, as well as the short-term assistance, the disaster unemployment relief, the disaster food stamps. Then, over the longer term, we will be there with a Federal task force; a Marshall plan, as the President called it, for flood-ravaged areas.

I thank my friend, the gentleman from North Dakota for yielding to me, and for the tremendous job that he has done in serving his people well.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks. The majority leader, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARMEY], said when it comes to disasters, once a North Dakotan, always a North Dakotan. The Congressman, although so capably representing Minnesota, has certainly shown with the depths of his concern and the sincerity of the energy behind his effort to do something to help that that is true for him as well.

Mr. Speaker, this concludes the portion of our discussion about the Grand Forks, ND disaster and the disaster that has impacted our entire area. I do ask for Members' support and prayers. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES FARMER, CIVIL RIGHTS FREEDOM FIGHTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS] is recognized for the remaining 18 minutes of the hour of the gentleman from North Dakota [Mr. POMEROY].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker I rise to pay tribute to one of the last of a special breed of freedom fighters, James Farmer. His voice has been strong and reliable; his leadership, invaluable. However, James Farmer has never sought the limelight. In the course of history and fate, he has not been given his due. We owe it to ourselves and to the unborn generations to stop and pay tribute to this great man, and that is why we are here tonight, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from the District of Columbia, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his great generosity in yielding to me. First, in light of some unavoidable scheduling difficulties, I will be brief, but I believe I had to come forward, because, Mr. Speaker, I was in the nonviolent army of Jim Farmer, and if I may say so, in the nonviolent army where one of the commanders was the gentleman who has the remaining period, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS].

He and I, because we were in that army, needed to come forward to pay tribute to a man who, as the gentleman from Georgia has said, many in America do not know, but who everybody knew in the 1960's when he led the nonviolent marches, and encouraged Americans to remain nonviolent in the face of what might otherwise have been temptations into violence.

The name of James Farmer is, indeed, a name that will go down in history as one of the great civil rights leaders of the 20th century. James fought the brutality of racism through nonviolent means, making him one of the Nation's most recognizable and influential black leaders in the 1960's.

□ 1845

In 1942, Jim Farmer and several Christian pacifists founded the Congress of Racial Equality with the goal of using nonviolent Gandhian tactics to challenge American racism. Under his leadership, the Congress of Racial Equality, or CORE as it became called, began a campaign of sit-ins which successfully ended discrimination in two Chicago restaurants in 1947. Later he would be appointed the executive director of CORE, and in 1961 his group would initiate the famous freedom rides throughout the Deep South. The gentleman from Georgia will tell you all about those rides.

Like Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, and other courageous black men of the early civil rights movement, Jim Farmer was no stranger to the danger of organizing nonviolent demonstrations in the tumultuous South of the 1960's. Jim Farmer literally put his life on the line more than once in the struggle for civil rights. In 1963, outside the town of

Plaquemine, LA, a mob of State troopers hunted for him after he organized nonviolent demonstrations. He said and I am quoting him: "I was meant to die that night, they were kicking open doors, beating up blacks in the streets, interrogating them with electric cattle prods." And remarkably, Jim made his escape by playing dead in the back of a hearse which carried him along back roads out of town.

This articulate and charismatic leader continued to spread the method of nonviolent demonstrations throughout the country. Under his direction, CORE organized voter registration and civil protests like the 1964 demonstration at the New York World's Fair to protest black conditions in that city. In 1966, Jim Farmer resigned from CORE and a leadership role and went on to continue his work in civil rights in other ways. As president of the Center for Community Action, he championed adult literacy. His service with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was noteworthy for programs increasing black employment in the agency under President Richard Nixon. Later he would direct the Council on Minority Planning and Strategy here in Washington.

The gentleman from Georgia, several other Members of Congress and I have written the President to ask that the Medal of Freedom be awarded to this great American who was among the class of the great civil rights leaders of the 1960's. He is, Mr. Speaker, today blind. He has lost the use of both of his legs. And yet with the indomitable determination for which he was known in his younger years, he continues as a distinguished professor of history and American studies at Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, VA.

This is a very distinguished American. He helped originate the nonviolent approach that saved our country from race war. One of the originators of this approach among the young people, I must say, Mr. Speaker, was the gentleman from Georgia, who perhaps more than any man in America suffered physically for his commitment to nonviolence. But he would be the first to note his gratitude to a man who was his senior and the leader of us all because we were young whippersnappers learning from the likes of Jim Farmer.

Few if any countries have solved so serious a problem, so deep a problem as American racism nonviolently. Martin Luther King, Jr., was not the only apostle of nonviolent resistance and peaceful approaches to breaking down racial barriers. He is only the best known. One of the very best known of course continues to serve in this Congress, and that is the gentleman from Georgia. But the fact is that in these days, when we decry violence in our country, we would do well to look to the leadership of those who were willing to die for nonviolent change.

The moment of civil rights triumph may be a distant memory to some.