

the Valley of the Jolly Green Giant. It is very productive, it is lush, and it is noted for the table vegetables that have been grown there over the past several decades.

In the valley there is a narrow river that winds back and forth and oxbows and normally is very placid. But occasionally it becomes a raging torrent. In 1997, this river carried more water than it ever has since the area was settled, over 100 years ago. The record water levels resulted in flooding in numerous communities, starting in Ortonville at the head of the river as it flows out of Big Stone Lake, required the evacuation of the community of Odessa. Tributaries flooded in Appleton, Dawson, MN. Montevideo, MN, my home community, was on the evening news for the first time in the history of the community repeatedly because of the efforts of the volunteers to try to stop the damage by sandbagging, building dikes.

Their efforts were successful except for one neighborhood which could not be saved and could not be diked. Downstream, Granite Falls built dikes. It was largely spared the ravages of the flood. North Redwood Falls was affected, however, and a few homes in the community known as New Ulm. This was all damage that was done, but fortunately we were spared the ravages of the communities on the Red River of the North.

People in my area felt quite fortunate, by comparison. The communities pulled together. Thousands of volunteers came from neighboring towns from the urban areas, and a real spirit of cooperation and goodwill prevailed. I can tell you that partisanship was certainly absent in this undertaking.

The people also were impressed with the activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, and the Army Corps of Engineers, both of which had a very substantial presence, and the National Guard troops that were mobilized and came in. I held a series of informational meetings on the disaster programs that were being established, the ones that were in place. The FEMA officials, the Army Corps of Engineers, the State agencies, U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies all came and participated in these meetings.

It appeared that we would have a disaster assistance program that would both be effective in addressing the needs of the communities and the residents and would be promptly available. Unfortunately, as the days wore on, it also emerged that partisanship would be a part of the picture.

In an effort to pass legislation that the leadership in this body and the other side of the building knew would be unacceptable to the President, they began to beat the drums about how important certain riders were. And unfortunately, I concluded that what was happening is that this disaster assistance bill was being hijacked for other purposes. Proposals that could not be

passed separately would not be accepted by the President were being shoehorned into the disaster assistance bill in hopes that the President could be brow beaten or embarrassed into signing them.

Well, we know what happened. The President vetoed the legislation. I am not here this evening to say that we have to point fingers at the leadership in the House and the Senate or criticize the President. The fact of the matter is, all of us knew that this legislation as it left Congress was on a collision course with the White House.

It is very difficult for me to tell people at home that the political process is consumed with politics and that we cannot deliver the type of assistance that has become a consensus package for disaster assistance. It is awfully difficult for me to explain to people why it is that controversial riders have to be attached to this legislation. I cannot explain it. I voted for it. I wanted to see it passed. But it was unacceptable.

The previous speaker said the money is in the pipeline. Do not worry. I would just like to briefly point out that although FEMA is well funded, the community development block grant program for relocation assistance is hanging in abeyance. People in businesses do not know what level of relocation assistance will be available, whether it will be available. Precious construction days are slipping by.

Similarly, the livestock indemnity program is in limbo and a number of other programs are simply not being addressed. I would like to urge, I implore the leadership of Congress to promptly send to the President a clean bill so that we can provide the assistance that has been long promised and is badly needed by the victims of this flooding in the upper Midwest.

EMERGENCY RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House and particularly to respond to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH], who spoke and who since left.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH made the point that Republicans, he said, were perceived as not liking children, not liking senior citizens, and now not liking flood victims. I do not know whether that is the case. Maybe that is his feeling and his concern. He also observed that both sides of the House have added things to emergency relief bills in the past and cited a New York Times article, which I have not read but which I know to be true.

That is the case. There is always the time when a bill that should pass and most of us believe must pass and be signed, in this case the belief for those

who have been ravaged by rains and flood and who are at risk and what this Nation wants to help. Everybody believes this bill ought to pass and it ought to pass quickly.

But lest my colleagues or anybody else be confused that this is the regular course of business, let me reflect a little bit on history. It took just 15 days to provide the assistance that President Bush asked this Congress to give for the victims of Hurricane Andrew. We are now in the 83rd day.

It was not that President Bush and the Congress, then led by Democrats, controlled by Democrats, agreed on everything. That was not the case. But what President Bush and the Democratic Congress did agree on was that it was our responsibility to pass that emergency relief in a timely fashion, 15 days, as opposed to the 83 days that this bill has languished in this Congress.

And why does this bill languish? Why does a bill that everybody said should pass and must pass not pass? It is, Mr. Speaker, because the leadership of this House and the leadership of the Senate has determined that they want to stare down the President, that they want to muscle the President, that they want to leverage the President, and they have taken hostage the victims of the floods of these past months in order to accomplish that objective.

My colleagues have heard the issues discussed. There are two principal ones. One is called a continuing resolution and it is put forth by the Republicans in this House and in the Senate as an effort to prevent government shutdown.

Mr. Speaker, I represent 56,000 Federal employees. I am for preventing government shutdown. In point of fact, it was in the last Congress for the first time since I have been serving since 1981 that we consciously and purposefully shut down the Government.

The Republican leadership said in April of 1995 they were going to do that. They reiterated that in July of 1995. And sure enough, on November 19, 1995, they shut down the Government, looked the President in the eye, and said, if you do not do it my way, we will do it no way.

That is not what the people sent us here to do. They sent us here to work together. The fact of the matter is that when we did work together, we passed appropriation bills and we opened the Government after 2 long shutdowns consciously planned by the Republican majority to force the President to do something that he said he was not going to do. That never happened when the Republicans were in control in the 1980s and the first 2 years of the 1990s and Democrats controlled this Congress.

Were there differences? Yes. Did the Democrats try to get advantage on the Republican President? Yes. But did there come a time when they said that they would not move, that they would be immovable in the face of presidential opposition? The answer is no.

When President Clinton asked for relief for the Midwest floods just in the last Congress, it just took us 29 days, less than one half of the time that this bill has languished in this House and in the Senate. The other issue that the Republicans talk about as being a must add to the emergency relief for flood victims is this sampling issue. It is all about politics, because Republicans have been quoted as saying, "If we allow sampling and the count that will result, we will find poor people, we will find minorities, and we are afraid that they will vote for Democrats and that will be to our political disadvantage."

So the Speaker of the House, who two years ago said that he thought sampling made sense and ought to be pursued has changed his position. And who suffers? The victims of the rain and the floods are held hostage as this political dispute is engaged.

Mr. Speaker, a number of us have risen on this floor tonight, a number of us are rising throughout this city and talking to the press, talking to the public, and talking, yes, to our colleagues. We have a budget agreement. We sat down and for 5 months worked out a very tough problem. I supported it. That is the proper process, not to hold hostage, either Government employees or flood victims or some other group and say, we will hold their relief in abeyance if they do not agree with us.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we urge the leadership of this House and the Senate to bring to this floor a clean, continuing resolution, relief for flood victims, support for our troops in Bosnia and around the world. Pass that, the President will sign it. We can pass it by 12 noon tomorrow and the President will sign it by tomorrow afternoon. That is what we ought to do. Let us be about the business of giving relief to the victims of these floods.

REPUBLICANS PLAY POLITICS WITH DISASTER RELIEF BILL

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

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, what would my colleagues think of someone who stood by watching while a neighbor's house was burning down? What if that person refused to call the fire department for help unless he or she got something in return? We would not think much of that person.

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Yet that is exactly what the Republican majority in Congress is doing with the flood victims in North Dakota as well as the victims in 35 other States.

The President of the United States and many of us in Congress have been trying to pass a \$5.5 billion disaster relief bill for these families. But the Republican majority, much like they did with the government shutdown last

year, is putting extremist ideology and partisan political maneuvering ahead of the relief for these needy people. Instead of giving these families the needed relief that they so very much deserve, they are holding the disaster relief bill hostage by trying to attach highly partisan legislative riders that have nothing to do with disaster relief. They know that these highly partisan extremist Republican riders would never pass the Congress if voted on separately. So what did they do? In very cynical judgment, the Republican leadership decided to tack these partisan riders onto a disaster relief bill, saying in their own political calculus, well, maybe we will embarrass the President of the United States into vetoing this, or maybe he will be so embarrassed he will not veto it and then we will get these partisan goodies for us, the Republican party.

They underestimated President Clinton who said loudly and clearly that he would not be put in the position of having the Republican majority hold these victims hostage and let them get away with it. The Republican majority would have to put forth a clean disaster relief bill. Otherwise, he would not sign it. If they want a debate on these other partisan issues, fine, let us debate them in the Congress. If they are right, we will pass them. If they deserve support, we will support them.

Last week, the Republican Senate majority leader is reported to have said that he would happily provide more trailers for these disaster victims to stay in while they, the Republicans, try to wear down the President to get their legislative goodies. If such reports are true and those remarks were in fact uttered, they are morally reprehensible. Such a position is unfair to these needy American families. Thousands of American citizens are homeless. They just lost all of their worldly possessions and are sleeping in shelters. They await Federal disaster relief funds to finance the rebuilding of their homes and their cities and helping each other in times of need. Is that not the essence of what it means to be an American, being part of the American community?

If the Republicans really believe that their highly partisan political riders are worthy of support, they should remove them from the disaster relief bill and have the Congress take them up separately once the disaster bill, the clean disaster relief bill, has been passed by the House tomorrow. Then we will take up whatever riders they want.

I urge my colleagues and my friends on the other side of the aisle to tell their leadership, the leadership of the Republican party, to stop playing politics with the lives of these thousands and thousands of disaster victims. Put forth a clean disaster relief bill. We will pass it in Congress. Our President will sign it. And let us help these people. Then we will take up your political stuff.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOB SCHAFER of Colorado). The Chair must remind all Members that under the rules and precedents of the House, it is not in order to cast reflections on the Senate or its Members individually or collectively.

NAFTA IS A FAILURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. LIPINSKI] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight deeply concerned, deeply concerned about our failed trade policies, deeply concerned about the plight of American workers, deeply concerned about the future of America.

Four years ago in this Chamber we had a long, long debate on NAFTA. NAFTA proponents pushed hard for its passage. They promised that NAFTA would create 200,000 American jobs. They warned that NAFTA was critical to the American economy and that American jobs depended on its passage.

After 40 months under NAFTA, we can clearly see that the reality is vastly different. The reality is that NAFTA worsened our trade balance with Mexico and Canada. Since NAFTA went into effect, our \$10 billion deficit with Canada turned into a larger \$23 billion deficit. Our \$1.7 billion surplus with Mexico slid into a \$16 billion deficit. Our growing trade deficits with Mexico and Canada mean that we are buying more than we are selling. It means that American jobs are being lost.

The reality is that 90 percent of the companies that promised to create jobs have not. Allied Signal, General Electric, Johnson and Johnson, Mattel, Procter & Gamble, Zenith and Exxon. The list goes on and on and on. They promised NAFTA would create American jobs. In a sense, they signed a promissory note to all the working men and women of America. The note was a promise that working Americans would be better off with NAFTA.

It is obvious today that these multinational corporations have defaulted on this promissory note. NAFTA is a complete and utter failure for working Americans.

Four years ago, in 1993, we all heard the mantra of 200,000 jobs over and over again. Guess what? It is now 1997 and we have lost an estimated 400,000 jobs. This is a net loss. It is a staggering sum. Bear in mind that this is not just another number. There are real people behind the statistics, real people with real families and real problems.

In their blind devotion to free trade, NAFTA proponents lost all contact with reality, and in so doing sacrificed 400,000 American jobs at the altar of free trade.

Some folks want to expand NAFTA to Chile and other Latin American nations. I am absolutely shocked. Can