

will be no votes during the session of the Senate on Monday, April 7, the day that we return, although there will be debate on that day. I expect debate to occur on the pending motion to proceed to the nuclear waste bill on that Monday, and the Senate may be asked to consider other legislative or executive items on that Monday. I will be discussing Monday's schedule further with the Democratic leader and will inform the Senate as to what other items the Senate may consider when it reconvenes following the Easter recess period.

I thank all my colleagues for their attention. I now withdraw the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, just in conclusion, I want to recognize the Senator from Arkansas, who is in the Chamber at this time. I thank him again for his courtesy in allowing me to do this and recognize that he is a member of the Committee of Energy and Natural Resources that reported this legislation. I think it is very important legislation. I understand that the Senators from Nevada will have to make their points in opposition to what it would do, but I do think it is just absolutely essential that this country face up to the need to deal with our nuclear waste. There is no easy way to do it. There is no perfect solution for all 100 Senators. But we passed it last time through the Senate and it died aborning in the House. I am told this time that we will, when we pass it, the House will also pass it, and this time we hope we can get it to the President. And we hope we can get it to the President in a way that he feels he can sign it.

We must do this because it is an issue that will not go away. Nuclear waste is sitting in cooling pools and barrels all over this country from South Carolina to Vermont, from the banks of the Mississippi River to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. We must deal with this problem, and so that is why I take this procedure to make sure that we get it up for consideration and for debate when we return from the Easter recess.

I thank the Chair. I thank the Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, let me say before I begin my remarks on a separate subject, that the majority leader is absolutely right when he talks about the necessity for developing a system of disposing of high-level nuclear waste in this country from our nuclear powerplants.

I, when I was Governor of Arkansas 22 years ago, wondered how on Earth we were going to deal with that. That was the reason I was always opposed to building more nuclear plants when we had not figured out how we were going to decommission the ones that we had and dispose of the nuclear waste that was coming out of them. So it is one of

the most difficult, knotty problems I have ever faced.

I am ranking on the Energy Committee and we have wrestled with this at length over the years. This is no time to debate it, except to say it is one of the most awesome, difficult problems I have ever been confronted with.

FORGO TAX CUTS UNTIL WE BALANCE THE BUDGET

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to my colleague in the House, Speaker GINGRICH. For those of you who think that I must need a saliva test for saying that, here is why. It was earlier this week in a press conference, that Speaker GINGRICH made a very responsible statement. He said that this Congress should forgo tax cuts until we balance the budget—an eminently sensible, unassailable proposition insofar as I am concerned.

I expected him to get the reception he got. Some of his very best friends in the House jumped on him and said, "You have betrayed us." Thirty House Members sent him a hot letter, saying, "What on Earth are you thinking?"

I don't know what he was thinking, but I assume he was thinking the same thing I was thinking, and that is that the snake oil of cutting taxes and balancing the budget makes no sense whatever. We have tried it. Ten years from now or 20 years from now, when memories have faded a little further, I would rather expect people to say, yes, we can cut taxes and balance the budget. But we are, really, only 4 years away from the end of George Bush's tenure as President; we are 16 years away from 1981 when the U.S. Senate took leave of its senses and passed a massive tax cut on the proposition that if we would do that and simultaneously balance the budget, which was at that moment \$87 billion out of kilter, that we could balance the budget by 1984 if we just bought into this proposition that we needed to cut taxes monumentally to stimulate the economy.

But I am again happy to report to my colleagues I did not buy that snake oil. There were 11 Senators—believe it—11 U.S. Senators who said, "This is crazy. It will never work. It makes no sense whatever. It violates economic principle, violates normal sanity." But we went ahead and did it, and I will never forget that fall day when President Reagan, at Rancho Mirage, signed the bill in front of about 100 television cameras, saying, "You have given me the tools. Now I'll do the job and nobody will be left behind."

Here is what happened. Twelve years later, we had accumulated \$2.5 trillion in additional debt to go with the already \$1 trillion debt that we had incurred during the first 200 years of this country's history—actually less than that. But from the date we adopted and ratified the Constitution in 1789, until the day we passed that tax cut in 1981, the debt had accumulated to less than \$1 trillion. Twelve short years later, we

had increased that trillion-dollar debt by \$3 trillion, and the national debt at that time then became \$4 trillion, and we have been striving to dig ourselves out of that hole ever since.

Mr. President, 3 or 4 weeks ago I was walking out that door to go back to my office and one of the most conservative Republican Senators in the U.S. Senate, who happens to be a good friend, came over to me and he said, "I'll tell you, DALE, confidentially, I've never seen things better. The economy is as good as it ever gets. A lot of things are going right in this country." I almost fainted. I said, "I could not agree with you more."

I sometimes wonder why people are not dancing in the streets. Since 1992 we have taken the deficit from \$290 billion to \$107 billion in 4 short years. The unemployment rate in this country is the lowest in years. Some economists say you cannot get it much lower than 5.3 or 5.4 percent. Interest rates are at a manageable level. And this morning, everybody who read the Washington Post saw a feature story about how the deficit is continuing to go down.

Let me back up. The President sent his budget over here and he said: In 1997, the deficit will be about \$127 billion. It will be about the same in 1998. This morning the newspaper reports that because of this economy, enjoying the longest sustained growth since Dwight Eisenhower was President, even CBO, which is very conservative in their projections, says the deficit this year is going to be down to \$115 billion. But other very reputable economists say, no, you are underestimating the taxes the people of this country are going to pay this year because the economy is doing just fine. They say, we believe the deficit will be under \$100 billion.

I am the eternal optimist. I like to believe that last statement, that the deficit will be below \$100 billion, turns out to be true, in which case we will have done something that is unprecedented in this country. We will have had 5 sustained years of deficit reduction.

Do you want the economy to continue as it is now and have this sustained growth that we have been enjoying? I will tell you a simple way to do it. You send a message to the American people that the U.S. Congress has come to its senses, and decided to forgo tax cuts of any kind until the United States budget is in balance.

Then tell them, on top of that, this year's deficit is not going to be \$99 billion; we're going to further reduce it to \$90 billion or \$85 billion. I can tell you, Wall Street will jump with joy.

Why would we be considering tax cuts of \$193 billion, almost \$200 billion? Why would the U.S. Senate be considering a \$200 billion tax cut over the next 5 years and \$508 billion over the next 10 years? Why are we considering that when we know that a tax cut of that magnitude is going to stimulate

the economy? And why do we want to stimulate an economy that is perking along so well that Alan Greenspan keeps Wall Street on edge every day saying, "If this economy gets any hotter, I'm going to raise interest rates"? That is the constant threat every time the Federal Reserve Board meets, the threat of higher interest rates.

You cut capital gains taxes, and I promise you it will not be long until you will have an interest rate increase from the Fed. You cut these other taxes to the tune of \$200 billion over the next 5 years, and I promise you interest rates will go up. Alan Greenspan will see to it. And if interest rates go up, the market will drop and economic activity will drop. So why would we insist on making a crazy economic decision to stimulate an economy which is moving along sharply?

I see statements in the press every morning of some politician saying, "Well, people know how to handle their money a lot better than Washington. It's a lot better to leave it in their pocket than send it to Washington." I understand that, and I understand that if you are looking for applause, that statement is a good way to get it. But I also understand that we have a golden opportunity that does not present itself often, and that is to honestly balance the budget and give the people of this Nation a night's sleep like they have never had before.

The Senator from New Mexico offered two budgets this afternoon. One was the President's. I said many times on this floor, I am not enamored with the President's budget. I am not enamored with any budget which does not reduce the deficit this year and next. The Senator from New Mexico is getting very close to singing my song. You like bipartisanship? You like for Republicans and Democrats to agree? The Senator from New Mexico probably is not trying to curry my favor, but he is getting awfully close to doing it with his resolution which says no tax cuts until we get to a balanced budget using CBO's figures.

Mr. President, the Budget Committee has been deliberating, and I think they have been making some progress, incidentally. They even think they have the deficit down to \$111 billion now, and if they are that close, I think it is absolutely imperative that we improve over the 1996 deficit by cutting it below \$107 billion this year and below that next year.

One of the things about the proposal of the Senator from New Mexico is that when we reach that happy day—when we are in balance—then half of any surplus will go to reduce the cuts made in nondefense discretionary spending. That is education, law enforcement, environment, health care, medical research. It is all the things that make us a great nation. But the Senator from New Mexico very carefully has focused on making cuts in nondefense discretionary spending. Well, what is wrong with asking the Defense Depart-

ment to help out? Why in the name of all that is good and holy would we, in 1996, insist that the Defense Department take \$9 billion more than they even asked for?

I sit on the Defense Appropriations Committee, and I am telling you, I get absolutely nauseated at times. You take the F-22 fighter plane, which we do not need, I promise you—and I am going to stand at this desk and maybe lose another battle on the F-22—but when you start talking to me about building 438 airplanes at \$180 million each to compete with a Russian airplane that is not even on the drawing board, let alone being off the drawing board, and at a time when we are building 1,000 advance F-18's which will be as good, or better, than any plane that could possibly challenge us for the next 20 years, and then follow that in 2015 with a joint strike fighter—no, they want to fill in what they say is a gap with a plane, Mr. President, that costs \$180 million a copy, 438 of them.

Would you like to know how much the estimated cost of the F-22 has gone up in the past year compared to what we were told in 1996? \$15 billion. \$15 billion in 1 year. God knows what it will be by the year 2006 or 2007 when we start building these airplanes. We will not be able to afford them, I can tell you that.

I am simply saying that we should look at what we are going to cut. The Senator from New Mexico has a \$100 billion cut in Medicare. And what about Medicaid? I do not know whether we are cutting Medicaid \$9 billion or \$22 billion. You hear conflicting numbers on that, but bear in mind what these programs are. Medicare is health care for our elderly; Medicaid is health care for the poor, the most vulnerable of all our children.

Last year, we cut welfare recipients' food stamps, everything, for the poorest people in the country, \$55 billion. Mr. President, I am not going to go home and tell my constituents that I voted to savage the most vulnerable people in our population, the children and the elderly and the poor, and that I voted to give the money to the wealthiest 5 percent of the people in America. And I promise you, if I were running against somebody that had done that, I could make that case in spades and be absolutely certain of my ground.

I did not vote for the welfare bill last year. I was one of the 21 people that did not. You can call me a bleeding heart liberal. You can call me anything you want to. But when this body starts saying the only way we can balance the budget is by giving the Pentagon billions they did not even ask for and cutting Medicare by \$100 billion, and depriving the poorest children in the country of Medicaid to the tune of \$22 billion, and making \$55 billion in welfare cuts—you see, I would have to say I never went to Methodist Sunday school as a boy, but I did. I believed those Methodist Sunday school stories

about my obligation to my fellow man. You hurt your fellow man, you insult God.

So I am not going to do it, whether you want to talk about religion or whether you want to talk about common sense, whether you want to talk about what has made this country great. One thing that has made this country great is our commitment to the elderly. We reduced the poverty rate among them from 25 percent to 12 percent since 1950. We ought to keep doing it. We ought to come to our senses.

I intend to sit down and visit with the Senator from New Mexico and talk seriously with him about this. I am not negotiating on behalf of the President or anybody else. But I want to applaud the Senator from New Mexico this afternoon because he has made a very important statement that a lot of people on that side will disagree with. But I think he is on the right track. I think NEWT GINGRICH made a very important statement earlier this week, and I applaud him for it.

Mr. President, I appreciate having the opportunity to make these statements. I have been intending to do this all week and had such a schedule I could not do it. But I am feeling better tonight about the direction we are headed than I have in some time.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on the executive calendar: Calendar Nos. 39, 40, 61, and 62.

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, this involves two appointments to the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, a nominee to be a U.S. district judge for the District Court in DC, Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, and Rose Ochi to be Director, Community Relations Service, Department of Justice.

NOMINATION OF JUDGE COLLEEN KOLLAR-KOTELLY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last night we finally broke through the stall and the Senate confirmed the nomination of Merrick Garland to be a judge on the United States Court of appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. During that extended debate on a nomination that had been delayed too long, I urged the Republican leadership to take up the nomination of Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

I am encouraged that those who schedule matters in the Senate have