

EXTENSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended for 15 minutes and that I be allowed to speak for as much time as I consume.

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

THE RECONCILIATION BILL

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I listened to the Senator from California and to some others today discussing the issues of priorities. And this Chamber, while now empty, will be full with aggressive debate and much interest next week when we deal with what is called the reconciliation bill. Frankly, most people do not know what reconciliation means. It is a long term that relates to reconciling, to spending, to revenues, and to what was determined in the budget resolution passed by the Congress. That is what reconciliation means. So the bill is brought to the floor, cuts spending, changes the Tax Code, and it reconciles.

We have substantial differences in priorities and differences of opinion about what is important, and that represents the debate. Some people get very upset because there is a debate going on. I think it is a sign of health. That is what politics is. Politics is not a pejorative term. It describes the process by which we make public decisions.

I said before that John F. Kennedy used to say every mother hopes her child grows up to be President, provided the child does not have to get involved in politics.

Of course, getting involved in politics is a method by which we make decisions in America. There is nothing wrong with that. It is a noble, honorable thing to do, and I happen to feel proud and privileged that I am a part of it in the Senate.

The Senator from California talked about her heritage, and I was thinking yesterday about this. I was on a radio call-in program and someone called who had read an account of my great grandmother settling in North Dakota. I had attended a Scandinavian event and someone in the press had done a story about how my grandmother came to North Dakota.

The story just in thumbnail sketch was that she, Caroline, and Otto met and fell in love in Oslo, Norway, and got married as young Norwegians and then moved to the New World and settled in St. Paul, MN. After some time Otto died and Caroline, with her children—I believe it was six children—moved to the prairies of North Dakota and pitched a tent and with her children built a house and homesteaded 160 acres of land.

Someone had read that account in a press story last week as a result of my attending a Scandinavian festival and

they called the radio station I was on and said is it not interesting, the story about your grandmother, this gritty, courageous Norwegian woman who comes from Norway to the United States, and then her husband dies and she takes her children to go to North Dakota to homestead on the prairie—pitches a tent, builds a house, raises a family, and homesteads 160 acres.

And she said, what do you think would have happened to your grandmother had we had a welfare system back at the turn of the century? Would there not have been the incentive to do that?

I thought about the question. It was an interesting question. I said, who do you think she got the land from? Who do you think created the Homestead Act? Who do you think passed a bill that said we are going to have a Homestead Act to say to people if you go out and homestead on the prairies and do the right things, we will give you 160 acres of land?

Yes, that is right, the Government. The Federal Government. Did it play an instrumental role in my great grandmother's life? You better believe it did. The Government has played a constructive role in a lot of lives. We are the Government, all of us. Every citizen in America is the Government. I know people want to just compartmentalize and say, boy, everything is awful, everything is evil, nothing works.

The fact is, from the Homestead Act to the GI bill, together, people working together, people making the right choices and right decisions about what is a priority for this country, have had an enormously important influence in the lives of people.

It is the Government, us together, we have built the education system in our country. We have something like 140 world class universities in this world. Over 120 of them are stationed where? In the United States of America. Let me say that again. We have something like 140 world class universities. Over 120 of them are located in our country. Chance? Accident? No, it is people working together. A lot of them are public institutions. People working together doing the right thing, saying education is important. We not only have done it at the top level, building world class universities, the best in the world, judged by everyone, but where are people going to school? Are they rushing to Iraq to go to college? I do not think so. No, people are coming to America to attend some of the greatest universities in the world. We have not only done it at the top, but we have done it at the bottom.

We created a Head Start Program, and we said to little kids 3, 4, 5 years old, who were in trouble, living in circumstances of poverty, living in dysfunctional families, we are going to give you a head start. We are going to give you an opportunity. And we created a Head Start Program to give those little kids an opportunity. And

guess what? It works. It works really well. Everybody understands it works.

Now, the majority is saying that we cannot afford that. We are going to kick 55,000 kids off the Head Start Program. Every one of those kids has a name, and they have in their hearts some hope that things are going to change in their lives. And Head Start has been helpful to those kids—helped them to hold on to that hope.

It is a long way of getting to the point of saying this is all about priorities, this debate. It is not a debate, as the Senator from Wyoming alleged a while ago, about people do not want to balance the budget and people do. What a bunch of nonsense. That is not what the debate is. Everybody in here believes we ought to balance the budget. The question is not whether. The question is how.

I voted for a balanced budget in this Chamber. I voted for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution for that matter. We had two versions, one that did not raid the Social Security System and one that did. I voted for that one that did not. But in any event, this is not about those who believe we should balance the budget and those who do not. All of us want the same goal. We want to balance the budget. This is about priorities.

The priorities that have been chosen by some in this Chamber—and it is their business. They have a vote. They have a right to choose priorities—say this. When the defense bill came to the floor of the Senate, they said to us we are conservative, we are frugal, we are penny pinchers, but when it comes to defense we want to spend \$7 billion more than the Secretary of Defense asked for. The Secretary of Defense says we need a certain number of trucks. These folks say, I am sorry, you need a lot more than that. We insist on building you trucks you did not ask for. Ships, we demand that you buy ships you say you do not want. Jet airplanes, F-15's, F-16's, we will write them in. You did not ask for them. Well, we are going to build them for you anyway. How about the B-2 bomber? I supported 20 B-2 bombers. I supported 100 B-1 bombers. But now we are told by people who are conservative, penny pinching, frugal Members of Congress, we want to build 20 more B-2 bombers at a cost of \$20 billion. It does not matter the Secretary of Defense says he does not want them. We insist you take them. And the hood ornament on this excess is the star wars program. We insist on an astrodome over America, a new star wars program, and we demand, by the way, that we go out and put it in the field by 1999, accelerated development—\$7 billion they want to stuff in the trousers of the Pentagon that the Secretary of Defense did not ask for.

Again, is this frugal? Is this penny pinching? Is this conservative? I do not think so. I think that is reckless, wild-eyed spending. This is my judgment.