In Illinois in 1993, Al Ronan, a legislator turned casino lobbyist, pulled lawmakers off the floor and handed them white envelopes containing campaign checks of $50 to $300.

''The gambling companies have been like a bull in a china shop,'' said William R. Eadington, director of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming, at the University of Nevada at Reno. ''These were companies that did not have the sophistication to understand the nuances of political activity.''

Some exports, noting the intense issue that gambling money has become in some states and localities, believe that the industry has turned into its own worst enemy.

Despite devoting $16.5 million to the referendum on casino legalization in Florida last year, pro-gambling forces were crushed at the polls, 62 percent to 38 percent, at least partly because of voter discomfort with that level of spending.

And given the corruption investigation in Louisiana, candidates for governor there spent much of the race this year trying to trump each other's anti-gambling stands.

Further, after St. Louis County Executive George Westfall accepted more than $150,000 in contributions from companies competing for a riverboat casino license, the County Council this year approved a ban on the industry's political donations.

In recent months, some casino companies have decided to put a stop to their own multimillion-dollar political wagers.

One such company is Mirage Resorts, which spent more than $10 million in a four-year failed campaign to place a casino in Bridgeport, Conn.

''Our company policy right now is that we are not going to go or in any jurisdiction and actively lobby to change any law, to actively try to convince people,'' said Richard D. Bronson, a member of Mirage's board and president of the company's development arm. ''Look what happened in Connecticut.''

Added Alan M. Feldman, Mirage's vice president for public affairs: ''It has told us that this isn't our bag. We're just not political animals.''●

MEASURE READ FOR THE FIRST TIME—HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 132

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I inquire of the Chair if House Joint Resolution 132 has arrived from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has.

Mr. LOTT. I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the joint resolution for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 132) affirming that budget negotiations shall be based on the most recent technical and economic assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office and shall achieve a balanced budget by fiscal year 2002 based on those assumptions.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I now ask for the second reading of the joint resolution, and I object to my own request on behalf of the Democratic leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

CLOTURE VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED TO THE LABOR-HHS APPROPRIATIONS BILL POSTPONED UNTIL WEDNESDAY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the Labor-HHS appropriations bill be postponed to occur on Wednesday at a time to be determined by the majority leader after consultation with the minority leader.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I am prepared now to go to the closing statement so that the staff of the Senate can proceed home in view of the ice and the weather that we are confronting. I wondered if the Senator from Nebraska had any further comments, or could we go ahead and proceed to close the Senate?

Mr. EXON. I thank my friend from Mississippi for his offer. I will take 5 minutes allotted in morning business, and then I will be glad to join others on my trek home, if that is satisfactory with the Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. I certainly understand that. Then I will have to reserve the right, depending on what is said, for 5 minutes of my own.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

THE BUDGET

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I would not be on the floor tonight, and had not intended to be on the floor tonight, until I saw a bevy of Republicans coming on the floor to try and beat up on the President, in particular, and the Democratic Party in general. When I heard that, I have responsibilities as the lead Democrat on the Budget Committee, and I decided to stay here and hear what is going on.

The Senator from Washington made several statements that I would like to take issue with. One thing that the Senator from Washington requested was that if I was concerned about the back-loading on the Republican budget plan, where 60 percent of the savings in the Republican budget plan to balance the budget are put off until the sixth and seventh year, did I have any suggestions as to how we could eliminate that. Well, I sure do.

If we would eliminate the $242 billion tax cut that basically benefits the wealthiest among us, for the most part, that would be one way we could alleviate that.

I would also like to comment briefly on the several statements made on the floor by those on that side of the aisle regarding the President of the United States breaking his agreement with regard to the continuing resolution that we worked out 2 weeks ago, I guess it was. I was there. I was part of that agreement. The President has not broken his word. The President of the United States said that he would accept a 7-year plan to balance the budget. And he has had a pretty good record as President, because under President Clinton, we have had 3 straight years of reduction in the deficit of the budget of the United States of America. That is the first time that has happened since Harry Truman. So this President has had some experience in fiscal responsibility.

The President has said in that agreement that he would agree to balance in 7 years, and that we would accept Congressional Budget Office numbers, with the understanding that CBO would review those numbers with the Office of Management and Budget and outside experts to make sure that their projections were as nearly accurate as possible.

He also said the other condition of making that agreement was the fact that we wish the Republicans to enter into discussions with us to protect programs that the Democratic Party has worked long and hard to protect—Medicare, Medicaid, educational programs, veterans benefits, agriculture, and others. We did not feel that, rushing to judgment, the Republicans had lived up to their part of that agreement. So, therefore, I think that there can be legitimate differences of opinion. And because that was worded in that manner, I think almost anyone could have interpreted that particular agreement as they wanted to.

It has been mentioned by my friend from Nevada that—and we are talking about the appropriations bills—if the President would just sign the appropriations bills, that would alleviate some of the problems. The appropriations bill should have been passed by the Republican-controlled Congress by October 1, 1995, when the new year began. Here we are in December, just passing appropriations bills—it is very late, almost 90 days late— and then we say to the President of the United States that because it is so late, because we are so late getting these to you, of course, you cannot veto them. That would be unfair.

We have also heard said that the President had shut down the Government. He has not. The President of the United States, through the Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE, made offer after offer, which the Republicans rejected, regarding a continuing resolution that would not have been necessary to have 1 day of shutdown. So I do not think it is fair to blame the President of the United States for that.

I am happy to say that I think, given the circumstances, we are now making some progress, as Senator DOLE and Senator DASCHLE earlier indicated on the floor. I am not sure that we accomplish a great deal with partisan bickering over something that we have placed, for their deliberation, consultation, and hope of resolving, in the hands of the President of the United States, the majority leader, ROBERT DOLE; the Speaker of the House, Mr. GINGRICH; the Democratic leader in the House, Congressman GEPHARDT; and our own TOM DASCHLE, the Democratic