

room and members of the committee sitting there and saying, yeah, well, we told you so. Those welfare cheats. That is all they want the money for is so they can buy cigarettes.

I wrote all that down, I remember specifically, because I thought it was such a tragedy. I do not want us to make the same mistake out here in our welfare reform package. The poor among us are really important. They do not have a lot and they only take up a very small part of our budget. If we look at the whole budget, and we consider Medicaid and housing and food stamps and family support, and those sorts of things, it takes up a very small part of our budget. Yet somehow in this country we want to make the poor the scapegoats for all the problems that we are having here with respect to balancing our budget. Let us not do that, please.

I recall a very important scripture where it said in the end time we will all come before the judgment and the Lord will say, "Enter my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in a few things; I am going to make you master over many." And we will say, "Well, when did I do that?" And it says that He will say, "Well, when you did it unto the least of these, My brother, you did it unto Me. When I was hungry, you gave Me food. When I was without clothes, you clothed Me. When I was thirsty, you gave Me drink. When I was in prison, you visited Me."

That is what is important, too. We should not, any of us here, just because we need to crunch numbers, or because we need to satisfy ourselves that the poor are the cause of our troubles, forget that we have a responsibility to be our brother's keeper.

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS SHOULD REFLECT REALITY

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I will say to my friend from Illinois, before he leaves the floor, he is one of the most gentle, one of the kindest persons on this floor. And oftentimes when a Member comes to the mike on the floor, Mr. Speaker, it is an advantage to follow someone who is not very popular and who is a scoundrel. I have the unlucky draw today to follow the most gentle Member of the House, but I do that nonetheless.

Mr. Speaker, I did not plan to speak today. As the Speaker knows, I have been in the Chair for the past 3 hours and I have had the benefit of listening to discussions on both sides of the aisle.

My friend from Missouri, Mr. VOLKMER, says what a benefit, and it has been beneficial. Not surprisingly, both sides are subjective, as I am. I am guilty of that. But I want to try to add some balance to this in my brief 5 minutes.

One of my friends who sits here to my left now conveniently remembered some of the bad fiscal times under President Reagan. But as was mentioned subsequent to his speech, he conveniently forgot about the fiscal chaos that occurred in the Carter years. Well, this is only natural, I think. I think it is convenient for Democrats to remember the bad for Republicans, and the Republicans to remember the bad for the Democrats. That is only natural, and that is part of the nature of the beast, but I think when we do it so consistently then we are seeking out a balance that we need to retrieve and bring it back into the realm of discussion.

When I was last home, Mr. Speaker, a woman came to me, one of my constituents, and she said answer a question for me. She said, as best I remember the last time the Government was shut down, prior to this last time, she said it was in 1991. And I think it was, indeed, in 1991. And she said to me, the spin from the media then was that President Bush shut down the Government. And she said, even I blamed him. But she said, now, virtually no one from the media is pointing an accusatory finger to the President. They are saying NEWT GINGRICH or the majority Republican Congress has shut it down.

I am wondering, and I do not want to sound paranoid, Mr. Speaker, but I am wondering, is it convenient to blame a President when he happens to be a Republican and to exonerate a Congress when it happens to be controlled by the Democrats? I am afraid that is the spin that we are taking. What is good for the goose is good for the gander.

Many people today have blamed the Congress for veterans not receiving their checks, if they, in fact, do not receive their checks. President Clinton had every opportunity to sign the appropriations bill into law this week and those checks would have been forthcoming. I cannot for the life of me figure why that would be the fault of the Congress.

Am I missing something, America? As my friend from Ohio says: Wake up, Congress.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COBLE. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I was going to ask the gentleman that very question, if I had missed something.

Correct me if I am wrong, is it not true that the President vetoed three appropriations bills, and that had he signed them, the Government would be up and running again today, right now?

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I know of two. It may well be three. Two comes to my mind. Is it three?

Mr. HOKE. The third was vetoed.

Mr. COBLE. So it is three. So my friends and the viewers who are watching C-SPAN now, let us come back into reality here and let us add balance to this discussion.

Mr. Speaker, as is obvious, I am not prepared, because I am doing this im-

promptu, but I am grateful for having had this time and I yield back the balance of my time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WHITE). Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to the President or the viewing audience.

PRESIDENT SAYS IT IS POSSIBLE TO BALANCE BUDGET BY 2002 AND MEET GOP GOAL

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

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I saw this morning in the Baltimore Sun this report, and it was so stunning to me that I just have to read part of it to you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be sure not to offend the gentleman from Texas, and I want to make it clear that I am addressing my remarks to you, Mr. Speaker.

In the paper it says, "In a positive signal, Clinton told reporters before the meeting", this is before yesterday's meeting with Speaker GINGRICH and with Majority Leader DOLE, says "In a positive signal, Clinton told reporters before the meeting that he now thinks it is possible to reach the GOP goal of a balanced budget by 2002 using the conservative economic calculations by CBO."

Let me read that again, Mr. Speaker. It says, "In a positive signal, Clinton told reporters before the meeting that he now thinks it is possible to reach the GOP goal of a balanced budget by 2002 using the conservative economic calculations by CBO." He said this yesterday. At that point, it had been 29 days since he had personally signed his name to a piece of legislation known as a continuing resolution that included the language that said that he agreed to work with the Congress to achieve a CBO-scored balanced budget by 2002 and that he would do this before the end of this term.

Now, here he told reporters yesterday that now he thinks it is possible to reach that goal using CBO numbers. What is going on? Did he not read the legislation that he himself had signed?

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Was the President not aware of what he had signed? Did the President not read that paragraph in the continuing resolution that said that he was agreeing to actually come forward with a CBO-scored balanced budget by the year 2002? Did he not read it? Does not he read the legislation he signs?

Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand this. Here he acts with complete surprise that now he is saying that gosh, he thinks it is possible to reach that