

Well, the Republicans have picked out their victims. Their victims are the sick, old and young sick, the aged, the working poor, and a portion of the middle class to bear the burden. And at the same time they have granted to their rich contributors substantial tax breaks, people who do not need the tax breaks, who really have not asked for the tax breaks. I know a lot of them; they have never asked me for one. And this is the silliest way I have ever seen to run a government.

Now that covers a lot. I have been around here for 33 years and in legislative bodies for a total of 43 years, so I have seen some silly things done. But the mismanagement of NEWT GINGRICH and company, the mismanagement of our Republican colleagues of the time and of the energy and of the money of this country and of the resources of this country is a shame.

Here in January 1996, we should be making substantial plans as to how the budget will be balanced, making equitable changes. Now, this balanced budget is not a lot different than other attempts that we have made. The amount of dollars are about the same as amount of dollars that we did 4 years ago and 2 years ago, the undertakings that we are taking. But most of the balance in this so-called balanced budget operation does not come at the beginning; it comes in the year 2001 and the year 2002.

Now, we all know what is going to happen then. By that time there will be a whole new group of people in charge in this country, and most of the silly things that are being said here today will have been forgotten and most of the savings that we are talking about will have been forgotten.

I talk a lot to the elderly. I guess they picked me out for conversation because they think I am about their age and I have got some comity with them. They are worried to death about being forced into managed care where they will get a gatekeeper for their medical care instead of a physician when they call on the phone for a doctor's appointment. They are scared that managed care will mean that the insurance companies will decide whether they get a treatment or not, not their doctor.

Most of us go to a doctor because we think we need to go to a doctor. But I would rather go to a doctor that is going to be rewarded by being paid for what he does for me, not being rewarded by what he does not do for me. These are the kind of things that worry Americans.

□ 1700

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, as we meet here on the eve of a new year, as

we begin 1996 with the budget still unresolved, I think it is important to speak of the situation in historical context. In the 15½ years that I have been in Congress, I only experienced about 9 months of Government that was not divided where the House and the Senate and the White House were controlled by the same party. For most of that time, we have enjoyed or suffered through divided Government in America. The White House was controlled by one party, and the Congress was generally controlled by the other party. We are in that same situation today, only a little differently.

In most of those 15 years, the Republican Party controlled the White House and the Democratic Party controlled the Congress. In the course of that 15-year period, we have had Government shutdowns. This is, I think, the fifth one we have experienced in the course of those 15 years. Most of them have been rather brief. They have been total shutdowns over a weekend or a few days, and eventually things were worked out. Unfortunately, the way things were worked out was typically business as usual. There were compromises made; there was gives and takes. There were deals cut. There was a sentiment that, well, it is better to take a bad deal and go home than to duke it out and see if we cannot resolve our budget problems and somehow eventually balance the U.S. budget.

The product of business as usual over those 15 years of budget battles that led to temporary shutdowns and eventually continuing resolutions was a deepening and a worsening U.S. public debt. It has reached a point today, now, where every young person today is likely to spend as much as 80 to 90 percent of their income in taxes to some government, State, local or Federal, during their lifetime. That is what economists tell us the debt is doing to us.

It has reached a point today where a young child born today will spend \$187,000 just paying interest on the debt we have accumulated. It has reached the point today where if we do not begin solving the Medicare crisis in this country, we will have two choices 7 years from now. We will face a Medicare system completely bankrupt and we will either have no Medicare system for our elderly, or we will have to double payroll taxes on working Americans. That will be the choice 7 years from now if we do not stick around and resolve this budget debate in this, the early days of January, or, if necessary, through 1996 until we reach election day and let the voters decide who is right or wrong.

At some point Americans are going to have to make a decision. Do they really like business as usual, where deals are cut at the end of every fiscal year and we go deeper and deeper into debt or would they rather some President at some time design a balanced budget amendment based on honest numbers within a reasonable period of

time that will end this fiscal insanity both for ourselves and for our children?

If you are conservative, you certainly want that done. If you are liberal and you see every year more and more of the Federal budget spent on interest on the debt instead of on programs for Americans, you ought to also want that done. We ought to agree upon that.

And so during the course of the last few months and the year, we offered an amendment to the Constitution requiring that Congress do that. We were met with objections here in the House. We succeeded in passing it in the House. We were met with objections in the other body. They did not pass it in the other body.

The objections generally ran like this. We do not need the Constitution to tell Congress to balance the budget. We can do it ourselves and we ought to do it now. That was the objection of the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. We do not need a constitutional amendment. We can do it and we ought to do it now.

Well, why not now? Why not a budget agreement that balances the budget in 7 years on honest numbers right now?

That is what this historic fight is all about. That is why we are in this awful period of partial Government shutdown, why we have this awful debate on our hands were sometimes it gets acrimonious and personal, and it should never get to that point, but that is why we stand here in the course of these early days in January struggling with the notion of how do we negotiate eventually to a position of a balanced budget in 7 years using honest numbers without doing business as usual, without caving in to all those who want to keep on taxing and spending as we have done for generations to the point that our children now are deeply in debt and will remain in debt for the duration of their lives. How do we resolve it. We resolve it by agreeing now to a balanced budget plan.

THE SHUTDOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, it may well be that in the 20th day of this crisis we are too close to it, have been too immersed in it to think clearly our way out of it. It is actually 25 days, if you consider the 5 days of the previous shutdown.

Let us look at what we say we are doing. The other side honestly admits that its purpose is to bring leverage on the President. Examining that proposition, it is clear that the other side has succeeded in bringing leverage as much as they are ever going to do.

Let me explain why. The fact is that the President has now signed on to a 7-year balanced budget. He had not done that before. Having done that, it would