

Every farmer of the United States would know what the policy for the next 7 years would be if the President had not vetoed that bill. Every farmer would know the amount of money that would be spent on agriculture from the U.S. Treasury over the next 7 years—that would be \$43.5 billion—with \$6 billion being spent in 1996. Without this legislation this money will not be spent and if the proposals from the other side of the aisle were adopted, there would not be \$6 billion going into agriculture in 1996. So the certainty of the money going there, it seems to me, ought to be pretty enticing to everybody on the other side of the aisle to back our proposal, plus the fact that there would be certainty in agriculture policy for the next 7 years.

Somewhat unrelated to the immediate problem we have before us but directly related to the fact that the other side is, in a sense, rejecting \$6 billion going into agriculture in 1996 and rejecting the proposal of this side of the certainty of \$43.5 billion going into agriculture over the next 7 years is the fact that—this may not apply to my three friends who are sitting over there from agriculture states, there are some prominent people on the other side of the aisle who have voted against past farm bills because they did not put enough money into agriculture. I am speaking specifically of the 1990 farm bill and the 1985 farm bill.

How ironic that those very same people are going to oppose what we are trying to do because somehow it puts too much money into agriculture this crop year. Is that not ironic. People on the other side of the aisle who voted against the 1990 farm bill, the 1985 farm bill because it did not put enough money into agriculture, are objecting to Republican efforts that has a farm bill that would put \$6 billion into agriculture and a certainty of \$43.5 billion over the next 7 years. And \$43.5 billion might sound like a lot of money. But it is less than half what has been spent on agriculture in recent years. The farm bill is about the only program in the Balanced Budget Act of 1995 that actually was cut. Most of the other programs in that Balanced Budget Act were slowing the rate of growth.

I want to move on and say it would have also given—what we proposed to do yesterday, and the very same thing that the President vetoed in December would have set a policy that every farmer in America would have the opportunity to plant according to the marketplace, not according to policy decisions made in Washington. Furthermore, every acre would be planted. I think that is a sound agricultural policy, and it was rejected by the other side yesterday.

When we are up to these planting deadlines you may not get exactly what you want, I may not get exactly what I want, but let me say this: Every major farm organization in the United States supports the Freedom To Farm Act. Every major commodity group in

the United States supports what was in that bill. Yet there are some who would take the view that at this last minute that is not good enough for them. Or in some cases, ironically, it might be too much. But what is ironic about that, some of the very same people said in past years we were not doing enough for agriculture.

I will yield the floor, although I hope we can have some more discussion on this if the people want to discuss it. I think it is such an important issue that we have to proceed and we have to reach an agreement on this.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I listened with interest to my colleague from Iowa and I want to make a couple of rejoinders and a couple of other additional comments.

I was on the floor yesterday, as a matter of fact. So, I well understand what happened yesterday. The Senator from Idaho brought a bill to the floor by unanimous consent to take the so-called Freedom To Farm Act out of the budget reconciliation bill and deem it passed by itself on the floor. I objected to that.

I then offered a unanimous-consent request on the floor to take the piece of legislation I had introduced extending the current farm program for 1 year. It would also provide enormous planting flexibility so farmers can plant any crop within their base acres, and provide some forgiveness of the advance deficiency agreement. And, the majority party objected to that.

Then the majority party, by the Senator from Idaho, offered a unanimous-consent request to abolish the 1949 Permanent Farm Act. I do not understand why the majority party would put itself in a position of coming to the floor of the Senate to say "We would like to go on record saying we want no farm policy." I puzzled over that last evening, wondering why would the majority party be out here with that message? Why would they say, "If we cannot get the Freedom To Farm Act, we want nothing. We want to abolish the 1949 act."

Then I offered a second unanimous-consent request in which I said, "Well, if you do not agree with extending the program for one year with the other provisions I included, then would you at least agree with forgiving the advance deficiency payments, because you said you agreed with that. I will make a unanimous-consent request that we bring that up and deem that to have passed." The majority party objected to that. So that is what happened yesterday.

This is not just a chapter. This is a novel. One has to read all the chapters to understand the story line of this novel. This is not, however, entertainment reading for farmers in our country.

We are at the end of January. Congress has a responsibility to have a

farm program and we do not have one. Some might say, "Well, you do not have one because you would not swallow what we tried to shove down somebody's throat." I heard from others yesterday, "Well, gee, nobody tried to shove anything down anybody's throat."

The Senator from Alabama is on the committee. There was not a markup in which there was full discussion. We should have all reasoned together in a bipartisan way the way we have always done it on a 5-year farm bill. There was none of that.

There was not a bipartisan approach to a farm bill. It was, "Here it is, swallow it or leave it. And, by the way, we will put it into the budget reconciliation bill for the first time in history." We have never done that before. The strategy was, "That is where we will put it and we know the President will veto the bill. Then after he vetoes it we will feign surprise that we do not have a farm policy."

I am puzzled. We must on every day in every way decide to give farmers an answer. What will the policy be? We must find a way to agree on common elements. I think there are areas where we have common agreement. We agree with substantial flexibility. We agree on that. There are a number of areas we agree. Forgiveness on some of the advance deficiencies.

Farmers do not have the luxury of saying, "It is spring. The sun is shining. We have just had some rain but I decided to defer my planting until July."

Congress ought not have the luxury of deciding it can wait until Friday, the next Friday, or the next spring to decide what the farm policy ought to be. If farmers do not have the luxury not to plant or harvest, we ought not have the luxury to decide not to give farmers an answer of what the farm policy ought to be in this country.

We have a responsibility to pass a 5-year farm plan. It has not been done. Somebody said, "Well, but we did it." Yes, it was stuck into a reconciliation bill. But, the fact is it did not get passed. Everybody knew it would not get signed by the President and so we are left with nothing.

It seems to me we have a responsibility now to make something out of this mess. All of us from farm country need to come together here. This is not a joke or a laughing matter or amusing to any farmer in this country. They want to know under what conditions will they plant this spring.

Farmers face twin risks of planting a seed, not knowing whether it will grow, and then, if it grows, not knowing whether there will be a price at the marketplace. Family size farms wash away when international prices go down and stay down. That is why we have a safety net. That safety net is what we should be debating here in this Congress. Farmers deserve an answer, and we are going to keep pushing day after day to give them an answer.

Let me comment on the \$6 billion my colleague mentioned. It is simply not the case that people over here say we do not want to spend enough on agriculture. That is not the case. My colleague knows that is not the case. The fact is, we are not debating the baseline for the 7-year period on agriculture. If we were debating that, the debate on the baseline is that the majority party's budget cut far more than twice as much from the baseline than the budget cuts that we had offered. If we are going to debate baselines, that is what we ought to debate. And I would be glad to do that, but I also want to go on to another brief subject.

A WAY TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I was very heartened a few minutes ago by the discussion of the Senator from Mississippi, Senator LOTT, in which he talked about something that a number of us had advocated and the President advocated last evening.

In fact, Senator EXON and I were in a press conference about a week or so ago. At that time we said one idea about resolving the budget issue is to package up each side's offer, take the lower spending cut on each of the offers. When you add all that up you reach \$711 billion in spending cuts and you reach savings sufficient so you can balance the budget. Why do we not do that?

The President came to the floor of the Chamber of the House last evening and said let us do that. Let us at least do that. We can just take the lower of the two offers from the Republicans and the Democrats. We can take the lower in each spending category of the two offers of saving money in every category. Then you have \$711 billion, which is sufficient to balance the budget.

What I heard this morning is that the Speaker of the House suggested that might be a good thing. Senator LOTT indicated that makes a lot of sense. If we are moving in that direction, I am enormously heartened by that. It is a way to move towards a balanced budget, do it with the right priorities and do it in the right way.

If we can do that, we can solve the problems of the CR, the debt limit. We can have a clean appropriations extension, pass a clean debt limit and agree on taking \$711 billion of savings. As a result we can balance this Federal budget. Then we will have done something, I think, of substantial good for this country.

So I would just say that I feel heartened by at least the little snippets I have heard today, first on television this morning by the Speaker, and next in a discussion by Senator LOTT. Maybe there is a formula here for breaking this gridlock and actually reaching results with respect to a 7-year balanced budget plan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition? The distinguished Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, we are in morning business as I understand it?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business expired at 5:30, but the Senator may request to proceed under morning business.

Mr. EXON. Has time been limited for Senators in morning business when we were in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We had been under a 5-minute guideline.

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I ask I may be allowed to proceed under the same rules for 5 minutes.

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

THE FARM BILL

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, there are two things I want to talk about. First, I have heard some of the discussion with regard to farm policy by some of my closest friends and colleagues on both sides of the aisle today. It is a pretty sad situation when I see that the usual farm coalition between Democrats and Republicans is obviously breaking down. I think it is a tragedy of major proportions.

I would simply say, there are those of us who feel we should stay in session for lots of reasons, not the least of which is to pass a farm bill. If we cannot come to some kind of an agreement, I hope the majority leader will simply call up the farm bill for discussion, debate it on the floor of the U.S. Senate, pass something, and send it to the President and see if he will sign it.

The President, I might add, has been very supportive of the position for funding of agriculture that this Senator, as the lead Democrat on the Budget Committee, has been for a long, long time. We have a profarm advocate sitting at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the President of the United States of America. We should continue to build and work with him.

The various moves that have been made with regard to the Freedom To Farm Act that I do not agree with I will not vote for. I will simply correct something I thought I heard, that all major farm organizations have supported the Freedom To Farm Act. The Farmers Union is a major farm organization in the State of Nebraska. The Farmers Union is not only against the Freedom To Farm Act, it thinks it is folly.

I would say to all of my colleagues, this Senator yesterday had printed in the RECORD some true facts with regard to how far down the welfare road we are going under the Freedom To Farm Act. In summarizing what I put in the RECORD yesterday on page S 321 under Exhibit 1, for a 500-acre farm, 120 bushels to the acre in corn yield, the present cash price is in the vicinity of \$3.10. That would be \$186,000 gross—not net, gross—that the farmer would receive.

On top of that, under the Freedom To Farm Act, there is a welfare payment that goes to corn farmers. I think, when all the corn farmers found out about this, and especially when the public found out about it, there would be a revolution, and the Freedom To Farm Act would fall by the wayside, because, in the example that I have just given, a farmer would receive a check from the Federal Government for 1996 of \$16,200 on top of the \$186,000 gross that he got from his crop.

That might not be so bad. You might argue that is still a good thing, at \$3.10 a bushel for corn. But most people in and outside the business recognize that \$3.10 a bushel for corn is a pretty good price and one we can be satisfied with. The point is, if it were \$5 a bushel or \$7 a bushel, which I do not think it will ever go to, but whatever the price of corn would be under the Freedom To Farm Act, this typical farmer, and every farmer who is in a similar situation, which is typical, would receive a check from the Government regardless of the price of corn in the marketplace. That is welfare. That is an excessive amount of money.

I am for freedom-to-farm principles, giving them the decisions they can make out there on the farm. I am for simplifying. But I simply say there is a fault here in the Freedom To Farm Act that is a giveaway.

DO NOT RECESS THE SENATE

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I wanted to make just a few comments, if I might, with regard to what I consider to be a very ill-advised move, and that is the consideration that maybe, after Friday, we are going to recess the U.S. Senate, right in the middle of very important negotiations. I would simply say, Mr. President, we should stay here, work on the farm bill, work on the debt ceiling, work on the budget, and come up with a compromise. Certainly I, too, was pleased with the President's address last night and the acceptance, generally, as I understand it, of Speaker GINGRICH and leading Republicans in the U.S. Senate that says to take this \$711 billion and balance the budget in 7 years, with CBO scoring, which we have all been for.

We cannot do those things, we cannot solve the crisis in the debt ceiling, by leaving here and not coming back until 2 or 3 days before we would have default. I hope, and I appeal, for both the House and the Senate to remain in session and do our work, especially at this critical time with regard to the farm bill and the other important matters that we have on our plate.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BODY ON NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last November, the British and Irish Governments acted jointly to create an innovative three-member committee,