

we were without a surplus, was about 2 percent over the last couple years. With the surplus, it has been 6 to 8 percent.

Now I don't argue the fact that some of the spending is the kind of spending we want to make. I am persuaded—and I have seen this in my own State legislature and here certainly—when there is a surplus, the growth of government goes up substantially. It goes up almost uncontrollably. So I think the idea of doing the three or four basic things the President set out last night is substantially right. One is to provide the money for those things that are key priorities in our Government activities. Two is to pay off the national debt under the proposition that it would be paid off in 10 years—all that can be paid off under the economic circumstances. And then we will have a tax return to the people who have paid the dollars.

We are all interested, of course, in those issues, in those activities that are out there, such as education. I was home this weekend, and we talked a little about how we see our State, our communities, our public lands, and our families in Wyoming in 10, 15 years. Interestingly enough, the most common thing, actually, was education and the economy—jobs. Of course, we all want our kids to have the best education but there is quite a little interest in having job training and education. Everywhere you go, education is always there.

This proposal has the Education Department at an 11.5-percent increase—which is the most in a very long time—to go for young people in preschool and reading and those things.

Of course, Social Security is to be protected; \$1.6 trillion out of the surplus would be preserved there.

Medicare, of course, comes out of the 2.5 percent on top of the Social Security. It would be there for a priority for doing some things. Pharmaceuticals: That is going to be a difficult thing, but it is something we are all dedicated to doing.

Strengthening defense, of course. It is interesting. I have had a couple opportunities to go on bases. One is in my home State. It is a missile base, Warren Air Force Base. I asked: What are your highest priorities? First was housing, particularly enlisted and NCO housing. Some of it had been there 30, 40 years. I went down to Quantico, VA, where I served in the Marine Corps. The first priority was base housing.

In this budget is a substantial amount of money for pay and housing for the military and also for health care. Then we will properly take a look at the military in general, the strategic aspects of it and weapons aspects of it. Times have changed, and the whole challenge of the military has changed. We used to go in with five divisions and tanks and artillery. Now we are more likely to have to move about a group by air and ship, and they have to sustain themselves for weeks. It is a totally different kind of thing.

I think we have a great opportunity here to meet our obligations as the Federal Government, to meet our fairness obligations with the taxpayers and return the surplus to them, and to meet our obligations to young people by paying off the debt we have incurred.

I am excited about the opportunities. If you want to look down the road, what do you see? How do you see the Federal Government? How do you see our country in 15 years? These are the kinds of things that will be important to us—to strengthen the economy with an energy policy and do these kinds of things.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CARNAHAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BURNS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate continue morning business until 2 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. BURNS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARPER). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I now be recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

KEEPING PROMISES ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, I rise today to give my first speech on the Senate floor, mindful of what a great privilege it is to stand here and also what a tremendous opportunity it is to be of service to others.

I am also mindful that I was elected last fall for special reasons. I made some very important promises to Minnesotans, promises that I intend to keep. Foremost among them was my promise to Minnesota senior citizens to help design and pass prescription drug coverage that would be available to everyone who is presently receiving Medicare.

Far too many times last year, I saw the suffering and the fear which our el-

derly were experiencing. I saw it in their weary faces, in their eyes filled with tears, and in their trembling hands. For them, the promises of Social Security and Medicare were unraveling, promises of retirement years with reliable economic security, free at least from the financial uncertainties and emergencies. But in their lives, higher and higher prescription drug prices destroyed their financial health and ravaged their emotional well-being.

So last spring I began my "Rx Express" bus trips to Canada. Borrowing this idea from others, I took busloads of Minnesota senior citizens to Canada where they could buy the same prescription medicines at far lower prices—often for half the cost in the United States, or less, for the same medicine, produced by exactly the same manufacturer.

I rode the first bus myself, leaving St. Cloud, MN, at 7 a.m. with 42 senior citizens and returning almost 18 hours later. This was no pleasure cruise. In fact, we spent the entire time crowded together on a compact bus, stopping only for customs, a Canadian doctor's office, a pharmacist, and for dinner. As we traveled those long hours, I was struck by the awful absurdity of our trip, because we in Minnesota pride ourselves on having world-class medical care facilities. In fact, people come from all over the world to Minnesota for the best possible health care—places such as the Mayo Clinic, the University of Minnesota Hospital, and Children's Hospital. Yet here we were, enduring a miserable travel marathon so that our senior citizens—the most elderly, frail, and vulnerable among us—could save precious dollars on the costs of their life-saving medicines.

Believe me, their cost savings were very substantial. We took a dozen of these bus trips to Canada last year, and the average savings per senior was \$350. One gentleman saved over \$1,400 on the cost of his U.S. drugs for the 6 months. Another woman said to me that her life had been saved twice—once when her medicine became available, and the second time when she could actually afford them.

I will continue the Rx Express buses by donating my Senate paychecks to the Minnesota Senior Federation or some other organization that will use my contributions to continue them. However, the solution to prescription drug affordability is not to bus every Minnesotan to Canada. Rather, it is to provide prescription drug coverage to every senior citizen across America.

When I was home last week, many elderly Minnesotans asked me, when will this kind of program become a reality? For them, the need is immediate and acute. So their need for us to act is immediate and acute. Unfortunately, today Congress shows little sign of reacting with urgency to this emergency. Last year, Members deadlocked over the form this coverage should take. Some favored adding prescription drug

coverage as a direct benefit under Medicare. Others wanted to assist seniors in purchasing private insurance policies to provide such coverage. Other proposals were introduced, but none gained enough support to pass into law.

So here we are again, and here again are the elderly in Minnesota and in 49 other States waiting for us to do what almost all of us say we want to do. As the President said last night, no senior in America should have to choose between buying food and buying prescriptions. The President is absolutely right. Yet today, across our country, retired Americans are being forced to make that same terrible choice: Don't eat, turn off the heat, or stop taking life-enhancing or even life-preserving medicines.

The President also said last night that Medicare must be modernized and we must make sure every senior on Medicare can choose a health care plan that offers prescription drugs. Again, the President is right. His words offer hope to millions of seniors who do not have and cannot afford such coverage. But as my mother used to say to me when I was growing up, actions speak louder than words. She usually said that when my actions or inactions were contradicting my words. For this Congress, that test begins today.

Were all the commitments I made just words? Were all the promises I made and heard others make just words? Were the President's assurances last night just words? I know I meant what I said, and I truly believe President Bush meant what he said last night. But now we must act. Now we must act.

The same proposals that were made last year can be considered again. I strongly prefer providing direct coverage under Medicare. I believe it best meets the essential requirements for any good plan—that the program would provide an immediate benefit; the plan would have universal coverage, the benefit being available to all eligible beneficiaries; the plan would negotiate discounts, allowing both seniors and the Government to get the lowest prices, negotiating price reductions just as every large business with self-insurers or every large HMO regularly does on behalf of its clients; the plan would provide catastrophic coverage for beneficiaries who have the highest drug costs.

However, I also know that these are some of the very reasons the pharmaceutical industry and others will fiercely oppose this particular program. I don't want to participate in another deadlock that prevented Congress from acting last year, nor do I want to participate in creating new excuses for why Congress has not passed universal drug coverage which the President can sign this year. I prefer it to be this month, but certainly no less than this year.

That timetable surely means designing and enacting a prescription drug

program that is separate from and passes before so-called comprehensive Medicare reform. If that lengthy review and reform points to modifications or improvements in our previously enacted prescription drug coverage, then so be it. If we can design a better, less costly, more efficient program, then terrific, but as Franklin Delano Roosevelt said to his Cabinet when he took office in 1933: Try something. If it doesn't work, try something else, but for God's sake, try something.

We can adopt one of the programs that has already been proposed or, in the President's spirit of bipartisanship, we can merge two of last year's competing proposals providing, for example, direct Medicare coverage for seniors earning up to 175 percent of the poverty level and for seniors earning over that amount, private insurance policies. Then we can see which one works better. What is important is to get something working now.

President Dwight Eisenhower once said: I think the people want peace so much that one of these days governments better get out of their way and let them have it. In the same way, I believe America's senior citizens want prescription drug coverage so much that our Government had better let them have it. The sooner the better. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this is the last day of February. I believe it was Percy Bysshe Shelley who said, "O Wind, if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

Spring is just around the corner.

Mr. President, while the Senate was in recess, the senior Senator from Massachusetts became a little bit more senior. On February 22, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY celebrated his 69th birthday.

Oh, to be 69 again.

In recognition of that occasion, I wish to say today what an enjoyable privilege it has been to work in the Senate with TED KENNEDY. History will be fair to Senator KENNEDY, and I have no doubt that history will judge him as one of the most effective Senators on that roll of 1,864 Senators as of now.

He is one of those rare workhorses. In the Senate we have show horses and we have workhorses. The show horses, you see them on TV quite often for the most part. Of course, we expect our elected leaders to be on TV often, but the workhorses, you don't see them on TV quite as often.

TED KENNEDY is one of those rare workhorse Senators in the truest meaning of that word. We will say it is one word, "workhorse."

Nearly every piece of progressive legislation since 1977 bears, if not TED KENNEDY's name, at least his imprint. That may be a bit of an exaggeration, so let me put it this way. I was first elected majority leader in the Senate in 1977. I was majority leader through the years of the Carter administration, 1977 through 1980. During that time, I was very familiar with the committee work, the legislation that I called up, the legislation that was amended, and the legislation that was adopted here and went to conference, the legislation that eventually became law. Many pieces of progressive legislation, beginning at the time of my tenure as majority leader the first time, carried TED KENNEDY's imprint.

He is a Senator who does his homework; he knows his subject. When he calls up an amendment, when he manages a bill, when he is the ranking member on a bill that has been called up, TED KENNEDY knows what he is talking about. We may not always agree with him, but we listen because we know he has mastered that subject matter.

Although blessed with wealth, he has always been a powerful and eloquent voice for the poor and oppressed, not just in the United States but also around the world. And he has also been a powerful and eloquent voice for the Democratic Party, its traditions, its causes.

We will long remember his soaring voice, his speeches to Democratic conventions, as well as his passionate struggle for the rights of the working people, for health care reform, for the strengthening of the Social Security net for America's less fortunate.

In the Senate, he has shown that public service is the place where, to paraphrase his late brother, John F. Kennedy, Americans can stop asking what their country can do for them but what they can do for their country.

Though we were out of session on TED KENNEDY's birthday, I say belatedly that I will always remember the support that Senator KENNEDY gave me during the years it was my privilege to serve as the Senate Democratic leader. When times got tough, as they occasionally do for a Senate leader, I knew I could always count on Senator KENNEDY's assistance. It may have been needed for an additional vote; it may have been for his assistance in building approval for a legislative proposal, but whatever was needed, Senator KENNEDY was there, and I was thankful.

Senator KENNEDY is a true friend, not only to me but also to the people of West Virginia, and when I make this personal reference the following two happenings will illustrate what I mean.

When I reached my 80th birthday—the Psalmist doesn't promise 80 years; the Psalmist promises only 70, but goes on to say: