

of an aggressive act that goes on in Washington on a daily basis, as I have said, oftentimes in the dark of night by this city and by our own agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, which is primarily responsible for the water treatment of this city.

The application of the Endangered Species Act, as we see it, is good for the country and good for the West. It ought to be the same act and it ought to be enforced in the same way in our Nation's Capital. This is simply not being done.

I am in the Chamber to speak to that issue and to recognize I have been involved with others in trying to bring about the conformity of the enforcement of the Endangered Species Act as we rebuild the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. This is one of many issues where there seems to be this attitude, well, if it is the Government doing it, somehow the Government can get away with it, and if it is in or near our Nation's Capital, where national security and the importance of the Congress are involved, then surely we can wink and nod and we can let the law be bypassed.

I think not, Mr. President, and I think you agree with me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming, Mr. Thomas.

PLANNING THE SENATE AGENDA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we enter into our second week of this fall's session after the recess, and we are faced with much to do. I think that is not unusual. It is often the case things pile up towards the end of the session, of course, but it seems to me we have a great many items to consider.

There are 13 appropriations bills to be passed in order to have this Government operate in the next fiscal year. The fiscal year begins October 1, which is only 3 weeks away. In the course of those 3 weeks, there are several days which, for various reasons—the Jewish holidays, and so on—there will not be votes. So we have really a relatively short time.

Obviously, what we will be doing is passing a continuing resolution before this is over, but nevertheless we have a great deal to do. None of these bills has yet gone to the President. Some of them have been passed in both Houses and are waiting now on the conference committees.

To be sure, it is difficult. It is always difficult. This year we are seeing some more difficulties because of the change in conditions with regard to the surplus, because of the difficulty I think we are finding now in staying within the budget we passed some time ago. Nevertheless, those are the items before us.

It does not seem to me perhaps that we are moving ahead quite as rapidly as we might. It does not seem to me we

have a very well designed plan to accomplish these things within a certain period of time.

I understand it is very difficult to bring together a group of this kind with different views and properly argue those views. On the other hand, the role of leadership is to have a plan. It is the role of leadership to cause things to happen. Even though they are difficult issues, they must be done. Unfortunately, as I noticed particularly this weekend on public media, and so on, rather than seeking to find a plan to move forward, we seem to be spending more time blaming one another, particularly the President and the administration, for the difficulties in which we find ourselves.

We can have different points of view about whether that is valid or whether it is not, but even if it is, the fact is we have things to do and we should be moving ahead with the plan to do them. Instead of that, we seem to be spending more of our time complaining about the administration's plan. The fact is, we do have indeed the second largest surplus in our history. We also have a budget that we passed that is about a 4-percent increase, which is a fairly low increase, which is what we need compared to what we have spent in the past several years. Our challenge is to stay within the budget we passed and to continue to move forward in doing that.

We hear a great deal of complaint about tax relief—too much tax relief. As a matter of fact, we are in the process of passing that relief back to the people who own the money, and that is as it should be, I believe, particularly as we find ourselves in a time with a very slowing economy. What else is more important than to return more money to the taxpayers if we indeed have a surplus? And we are doing that.

The question, of course, is one of not reaching into Social Security, which I happen to agree with, although we have done that for how many years and those dollars are accounted for in the Social Security fund, even though for years they have been spent for other things without a great deal of complaint, I might add.

However, I do not think that is really the issue. The issue is holding down spending to comply with the budget that we passed. It seems to me that ought to be our challenge.

There is, of course, in my view, no real threat to the beneficiaries of Social Security. Those obligations are there. They are going to be there. We have paid down more debt because of the surpluses over the last several years than in years past. So what we really need to do is address ourselves to the issues we have before us. The turndown in the economy, of course, is the thing most of us are very concerned about, all of us, whether we are here, whether we are in Casper, WY, or

wherever, and to do what we can to seek to play the Government's role in doing what we can to change that.

A reduction in taxes, the return of taxes, is designed to help do that. Hopefully, it will. We are not through with that yet. We are in the process with, I believe, seven reductions in the last year in interest rates designed hopefully to stimulate the economy. We need to do that.

Limiting our spending in the budget is another aspect we are seeking to help pick up and strengthen the economy. There are some other things we ought to be doing. We ought to be doing something with giving the President the opportunity to have trade agreements that are then brought to the Senate for approval. They are all brought to the Senate for approval, but the world economy and our involvement in trade, particularly in agriculture, in which I am involved, was the difficulty in the Asian currency a year ago which brought a good deal of problems to our economy. So we are a part of that, of course.

There are a number of things we can do, and I cannot think of anything more important for us to talk about collectively than what is appropriate for the Government in helping to strengthen this economy.

Yesterday, again on the TV, there were some questions about that: Oh, no, it is up to the President to do that. I do not agree with that. Of course, the President is the one who brings up the suggestions to the Senate. The President is not in control of the Senate, and the Senate has some responsibilities to take leadership as well. The idea of saying it all began since this President became President is not true. It has been here for a year, and then to say it is up to the President, I do not agree with that.

Each of us in this body has some responsibility to give thought to what we can do to help strengthen this economy, which everyone in this country wants us to do.

In addition to that, of course, it seems to me we ought to be moving on an energy bill. This is very important to us, not only to the economy, but we are going to see some more impacts of it, of course, in the winter. We can do that. We started to work on pharmaceuticals. The budget contains opportunity for that. We can do that. Education has been passed by both Houses of Congress and still remains in conference.

I know many in the leadership on both sides are very anxious to work together and show evidence of working together and want to work together. I certainly encourage that be done so we can do what we are here to do, which is to solve the problems before the country, the legitimate problems for the Federal Government.

I yield the floor.