

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, September 11, 2001

The House met at 9 a.m.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

TAKING ACTION TO PROTECT HEALTH

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this Congress is taking action to help protect world health in the fight against HIV AIDS.

In Colombia we are spending over a billion dollars to fight the grip of the deadly coca trade that includes eradication of the coca plant and aid to farmers to attempt to shift their production.

I find it ironic in the midst of this action by Congress that there are some that would have us reverse a long-standing policy and start promoting the sale of American tobacco overseas. Tobacco is the only legal product which, if used properly, will kill or at least inflict serious bodily damage.

The effects on Americans are clear to most policy-makers. Close to 360,000 Americans will die of lung disease this year. It is the third largest cause of death responsible for one in seven deaths. More than 25 million Americans are now living with chronic lung disease, and the use of tobacco is the leading cause in that condition.

Sadly, the impacts of tobacco-related lung disease is not limited to the United States. Tobacco was estimated to account for just over 3 million annual deaths worldwide in 1990, and that is rising to over 4 million deaths currently. It is estimated that tobacco attributable deaths will rise to 8.5 million within the next 20 years and 10 million in about 2030.

According to the World Health Organization, while tobacco use is actually declining in many developed countries, it is increasing rapidly in those that are developing.

In China alone, 14.5 percent of the deaths are attributable to tobacco. What is dramatically different in China is that in other developed countries with a similar rate the number of smokers is growing rapidly, such that two-thirds of the men are smokers before the age of 25. Few quit and about half can be expected to be killed by tobacco. In practical terms, this means in China the number of male deaths alone from tobacco is expected to be roughly 3 million annually by the middle of the century.

Mr. Speaker, it is sad to me that after decades of deception and death that we are starting to turn the corner in this country where we have hundreds of billions of dollars in tobacco settlement that is available only after litigation. It is something that this Congress was unwilling or unable to correct to try and help reduce the number of new addicts and victims. It has opportunity to help not just the people who are addicted to tobacco but to help change the patterns in this country, like we are doing in Colombia to help farmers be involved with productive crops that are not destructive crops.

There are some states that have used tobacco settlement money to do that, like Maryland. I would hope that this Congress would not reverse course, that it would not start promoting the use of our tax dollars to promote the sale of tobacco overseas, but keep our eye on our priority, which is to reduce dependence on tobacco, help wean the American farmer away from dependence on tobacco, use our resources to stop the destruction of death and disease around the world.

It would be ironic that a Congress that is working to stop these abusive practices in Colombia with addictive drugs, that is trying to fight the spread of HIV AIDS around the world, would take a tragic step backward.

There was an attempt to insert in the agriculture bill an amendment that would reverse this 8 year prohibition on using U.S. resources to promote subsidization of tobacco sales overseas. Wisely, the Committee on International Relations, on a broad bipartisan vote, voted to remove those provisions from the agriculture bill.

I hope my colleagues will stand firm. Keep the existing policies. Stop the export of death overseas with tobacco.

DEBATE ON THE BUDGET SURPLUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois). Under the Speak-

er's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLENGER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I have a strange problem with the way we are talking about our present debate on the surplus. For 30 years, 40 years we never worried about the surplus. We never had a surplus and we spent it all. So, here now, we are about to have a nervous breakdown on whether we are going to have a \$150 billion surplus. Oh, my goodness gracious, only \$150 billion, my, how can we possibly get along there?

What we really should be worrying about is, we are having a manufacturers' recession right now. Why? Well, as a manufacturer myself, and I checked with businesses back home, the main problem we have got is our dollar is the most overvalued currency on the planet today.

You should be a tourist traveling anywhere in the world. Everything seems cheap. The reason it is cheap is because our dollar is worth so much more than the value of currency of the place you are visiting. If we could do something to reduce this I think we would accomplish something, but we cannot compete with anybody in the world at the present time with the dollar as long as it continues to be the most expensive currency in the world.

Let me give some examples. After the earthquake in El Salvador, some of my friends there approached me with the idea that they needed to buy two by fours. They bought all the two by fours that were available as far as they were concerned in Central America, and so I called up some friends of mine down in North Carolina and asked them about what kind of a deal can you give me on 14 foot and 12 foot two by fours, and they said, Cass, well, the lumber market is terrible now but we will see what we can do.

These numbers are not exact, but they will show what I am talking about. This gentleman down there offered me something like a container load of two by fours, mixed 12 and 14 foot, for, say, \$4,000 for a container. I checked with a real large timber firm down in Louisiana and theirs was \$5,000 a container. So I figured I had a pretty good price.

So I called back my friend from El Salvador, and I said I think I have got a good deal for you here, let us see if we cannot negotiate. He said, well, what is your price. I said the deal we

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.