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acts of kindness that take place on a daily basis.

No, the true strength of the country is when somebody says, "I think I want to teach some values to a child," and becomes a Boy Scout or Girl Scout leader or Boys or Girls Club leader. The true strength of the country comes when a mother or dad understands their most important job is not what they're doing during the day, but loving—if they happen to have a child—loving their children with all their heart and all their soul. That's the true strength of this country.

I know we've lost some wealth in the stock market recently, but the real wealth of America is the creative energy of our folks. And tax policy ought to unleash the creative energy of Americans and trust Americans with their own money. I'd like your help. I'd like your help. This isn't for me. This isn't help for a political party. This is help for doing what's right for America. This is important for our economy, but it's also important for the families and hard-working people all across the country. And we can afford it.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the factory. In his remarks, he referred to Elson Seale, owner, Bajan Industries, LLC, his wife, Delores, and their children Jamal and Janine; and Mayor Kay Barnes of Kansas City.

Remarks at the Tractor Supply Company and an Exchange With Reporters in Billings, Montana

March 26, 2001

The President. I want to thank—Fred, thank you for having me, and I want to thank you all for coming. I look forward to talking about American agriculture with you. The issues that relate directly to Montana farmers and ranchers are issues that relate to Texas farmers and ranchers, too. Agriculture is an incredibly important part of our Nation's economy.

I'm going to tell you a couple of things, then I'm going to listen. But I am going to tell you that when it comes to negotiations and trade agreements, we will treat agriculture as an important, integral part of our strategy. We won't kind of hold agriculture out and then maybe try to get a good deal or not. Agriculture is an important part of our country's economic future.

Secondly, I'm—we'll have regulations based upon sound science.

Thirdly, I'm worried about energy; I know you all are, as well. Energy is driving up the cost of farming. It's not only driving up the cost of, obviously, what it takes to run your vehicles; it also drives up the cost of fertilizer. And I understand that.

And fourthly, I look forward to discussing with you some of the conversations I've had with our Canadian friends to the north in regards to labeling and wheat policy and timber policy, as well. So I'm honored that you all gave me a chance to come by and visit. It's my first time I've ever been to the State of Montana. But I suspect I'm going to find—good folks here in this State are kind of like the folks where I came from, hard-working, God-fearing, family-loving people who are worried about how to make a living in the agriculture sector. Thank you all for giving me a chance to be here.

Agricultural Assistance

Q. Mr. President, do you see a need for a farm rescue package along the—[*inaudible*]—of last year's?

The President. It's too early to tell, but we've got contingency money set aside. We've got contingency money set aside in case that needs to happen.

Q. And do you see a need for a permanent change in the farm—[*inaudible*]?

The President. It's too early to tell. What we don't know yet is whether or not the new risk management programs that have been put in place achieve their desired effect.

Montana Drought

Q. Montana farmers are worried about drought, Mr. President. What can you do to help them?

The President. Pray. Pray for rain. [*Laughter*] We have just come through a tough drought in my State of Texas, and I understand what drought does to a farmer. The only thing we can do is hope moisture comes, and we've got to call upon the good Lord.

In the meantime, we've got disaster payments and risk management programs at the Federal level.

Thank you.

Treasury Secretary Paul H. O'Neill

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what led Mr. O'Neill to go ahead and give his stock options back?

The President. You need to talk to Mr. O'Neill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:08 p.m. in the warehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Fred Booth, Presidential designee to head the Montana office of the Farm Service Agency. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Community in Billings

March 26, 2001

Thank you all. This is my first time in your beautiful state, and I want to thank you for the warm welcome.

Before I begin and say the thanks, I do want you all to join me in a moment of silent prayer for the two soldiers, men who wore the uniform of America, who lost their lives in Germany today, and two of our pilots who are missing over Great Britain. Would you please join me in a moment of silent prayer, please?

[*A moment of silence was observed.*]

Thank you. God bless them. God bless their families, and God bless America.

I first want to say thanks to my friend, your former Governor. It seems like you still remember who he is. I, of course, know who he is. I had no stronger ally, a good man, as you know and, gosh, maybe one of these days we might convince him to get his political uniform back on.

I appreciate so very much getting to know your current Governor. The first time I met her was at the White House. We had a pretty fancy dinner. It was the first fancy dinner we had at the White House. I invited all the Governors over, and she came and did just fine, I want you to know. [*Laughter*] Now, her husband, on the other hand—[*laughter*]—I don't know where he rented his tux, but he looked quite handsome. At any rate, it was an honor to know your Governor. People say the kindest things about her. She's a good, strong leader, and I know you're proud to call her Governor and proud to call the Lieutenant Governor, Lieutenant Governor. I want to thank them both for being up here today. Thank you all for coming.

I'm particularly proud to be here with the Montana congressional delegation. Fine Americans. Fine Americans, all starting with the senior member of the delegation, the senior Senator who is a man who's got enormous power in Washington. He's the kind of man who has got enough power that if he likes what I have to say and you like what I have to say, I'm confident he'll get it done. We're counting on you.

And I flew into town today with Senator Burns, a man who is not a very shy, retiring fellow. [*Laughter*] After all, he was an auctioneer. But I'm looking forward to having his vote when these bills start hitting the floor. He looked in, and there we were, about 35,000 feet, and he said, "President, you're doing the right thing."

And we already know how this man is going to vote. We've had a couple of tough votes on the floor of the House, and Congressman, thank you for your strong support. You did the right thing for the people in Montana.

I want to talk a little bit about the budget. There's a lot of talk about the budget, and I found it's much better for me to take my case directly to the people. Sometimes the word coming out of Washington gets filtered. Sometimes it's hard to get a direct message to the people. So I found the best way to get the message out is to travel the country. And it's pretty healthy to do so, too. Sometimes some of us in Washington forget where we come from. And that's why it's good for the President to get out and remind people of who matters. And the people that matter are the hard-working people of America who pay this Nation's bills, that's who matters.

I'd like people to know my perspective of how we're going to spend your money. I'd like to characterize it as a commonsense way of spending the people's money, which means we start with priorities. Anytime you