

The last point is important if we are to reach our primary goal of a balanced budget. Mr. President, farmers and ranchers are some of the strongest supporters of balancing the Federal budget.

A balanced budget would be great news for South Dakota farmers and ranchers and their families. It would mean lower interest rates and a growing economy. A balanced budget would reduce interest rates by at least 1.5 percent. A reduction in interest rates of that size would help raise farm income by more than \$2 billion per year.

So, to conclude and to summarize, I support this Congress going forward on legislation on the farm bill now. I am weary of the filibuster that has kept us from dealing with amendments. If we cannot have the freedom-to-farm bill, let us have a modification of it, which the Leahy-Craig offer encompasses. This will mean more prosperity to farmers and also less costs to the taxpayers. It will mean strengthening our position in international trade, which will help our country in general.

We cannot delay any longer. Our farmers are meeting with their bankers at this hour, trying to work out their financial plans. In the southern part of our country, they are prepared to plant. The Congress seems to be dilly-dallying. Let people understand what is going on here. We, on this side of the aisle, are ready to legislate. We are going to have a cloture vote today. I plead with my colleagues, let us go and legislate and offer amendments and we will have a farm bill worked out. But let there be no misunderstanding out in the country. We are not holding this farm bill up. We are here, ready to legislate. The cloture vote this afternoon, if we fail, it will hold us up again.

I want to make it very clear to my farmers where this delay is coming from. My farmers, generally speaking, want freedom to farm. Let us get the truth out. Let us have a farm bill now.

I yield the floor.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANTORUM). The Senator from Indiana.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. DORGAN. Mr. President, is the Senate now in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It requires consent to extend morning business.

Mr. DORGAN. My purpose in seeking recognition was to ask unanimous consent to be able to speak in morning business for 10 minutes. That will take less time if the folks on the majority side need the floor at some point.

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

THE FARM BILL

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the indulgence of other Senators. My intention was that if we have some morning business that we have it on both sides. I want to be able to discuss for a bit the subject of agriculture and where we find ourselves. My specific interest in doing so is that I think there is some confusion about exactly where we are.

First of all, the farm bill is not now pending. We are in morning business. The farm bill will be pending when we finish morning business and bring it back to the floor of the Senate. But contrary to previous assertions, no one has prevented the farm bill from coming to the floor. It is on the floor. It is and will be the pending business before the Senate. There is not an effort and there has not been an effort by anyone to prevent the farm bill from coming to the floor. Those who suggest that are mistating where we are.

The farm bill will be on the floor of the Senate this afternoon. It is correct to state we have had a cloture vote and will likely have a second cloture vote this afternoon. To suggest we should invoke cloture so we can get on to amendments, however, is a suggestion that does not conform with the Rules of the Senate.

In fact, in order to offer many of the amendments that have been sent to the desk, you would have to avoid cloture so the amendments would be able to be offered as being germane. After cloture they would not be ruled as being germane.

The farm bill has been on the floor of the Senate a very short amount of time. So, a vote for cloture at this point, would be a vote to cut off the opportunity to offer amendments and have them considered. Many of us feel that would be inappropriate.

Let me emphasize this because it is very important. This is not a debate between those in the U.S. Senate who believe farmers ought to have more planting flexibility and those who believe they should not have more planting flexibility. That is what this debate is being portrayed as. But, that is not the case.

I have offered a couple of amendments that are sitting at the desk. I have previously offered unanimous consent requests about extension of current law. In every case with the amendments that are at the desk and the unanimous-consent requests that I have offered, we suggest that farmers be given planting flexibility on their base acres. Let the farmers decide what they want to plant, not the Federal Government.

When people stand up and say this is a choice between those who want to put you in a straitjacket on planting decisions and those of us who want freedom to farm, where you get flexi-

bility, that is not the fact. It is a false choice.

No farm program proposal that I know of before this body would require that we be in that circumstance. Nobody is offering a choice in which farmers will be required to be told by the Federal Government what their planting decisions might or might not be. Everyone here, myself and others, believes that we ought to have substantial planting flexibility on base acres for farmers.

There is not any differences either, in my judgment, with respect to the issue of repayment of advance deficiency payments for those who suffered crop losses.

Everything I have offered through unanimous-consent requests, as well as the two amendments to the freedom-to-farm bill that are now at the desk, would do basically the same thing. We would forgive advance deficiency payments for those who have suffered crop losses. So, that is not what this debate is about either. If people stand up and say that is what this debate is about, that is a false set of choices.

I just heard a discussion, and I heard it previously, that this is not about whether there should be permanent farm law. They say, "Of course, there will be a farm program." Or they say, "There will likely be a farm program." That is not the case at all.

The freedom-to-farm bill has some attractive features which I hope we can capture and put into compromise and move forward. But it also has something which, in my judgment, is a bad feature for rural America. Most notably this is a bill that pays a severance payment. It gives severance pay to farmers for the purpose of transitioning them away from any sort of farm program at all.

Why do I say that? Because the freedom-to-farm bill itself says there shall be no more permanent farm law. This bill is going to repeal the underlying farm law. Why would they do that? Because they do not want permanent farm law.

They could rectify that easily, if they wanted to modify their proposal. But, they do not intend to modify it. These really are severance payments, paid up front, for the purpose of providing that there will be no further farm programs. That is what it is about. It is very simple and, in my judgment, cannot be misrepresented. I know people try, but it cannot be. There will no longer be a permanent farm law. That is the purpose of repealing it in this proposal.

The reason I care about this, as well as the reason that others care, is that we care whether there is a network of family farm yard lights out in rural America. In my judgment, if a farm bill is not designed to try to help family farmers, then let us not even talk about a farm bill. Then, let us not have a farm bill. Then, let us not have a U.S. Department of Agriculture, which was started under Abe Lincoln with nine

employees and has become this behemoth down there. We do not need USDA and a farm bill if they are not designed to help protect family-sized farmers.

When you have international price depressions and prices drop, family farmers get washed away. They are too small to have much of a financial base to withstand declining international prices over which they have no control.

Will this country be farmed by giant agrifactories from California to Maine? If you think that is fine, then we do not need to debate this farm law. If that is what you decide then we do not need a farm program. However, if you think we ought to encourage and nurture a network of family farms in this country, have yard lights dotting the prairies, and have family farms that become the blood vessels that provide nourishment and economic health to rural areas and small towns, then you would care about the kind of farm program we enact.

Some of what has been suggested in the freedom-to-farm bill makes sense. Some of it makes no sense at all. Where we ought to find ourselves, in my judgment, is in a compromise in which we take the best of what both sides have to offer.

We had a compromise similar to that over the weekend. It has been discussed at some length. It is one that I would support and one that makes sense, in my judgment. It retains current permanent farm law. It substantially changes the up-front payments. It substantially increases flexibility on planning for farmers. It forgives advanced deficiency payments for those who have suffered crop losses. It does a lot of things which together represent the best features of what has been offered from both sides.

Yet we are told by some, "Either you invoke cloture and cut off debate and cut off amendments on the freedom-to-farm bill or we are not going to play; we will go home, and we will blame it on you all."

We are way beyond the issue of blame. This is February 1996. In the middle of last year there should have been a debate on the floor of the Senate about a farm bill, and there was not. Everybody in this Chamber knows that. We failed.

Now in February 1996, if we are going to construct farm legislation, let us not do it by holding a club to somebody's head. Let us do it by deciding that we will put together farm legislation the way it has always been put together in the U.S. Senate. That is, let's do it in a bipartisan way, taking the good ideas that come from both sides.

Senator GRASSLEY is on the floor. I expect he will want to speak next. He knows as much about agriculture as almost anybody in this Chamber and cares a lot about it. We may have different views of exactly how these cloture votes work and exactly what we ought to do for the future of family farming. But, we do not disagree, in my

judgment, at all about the importance of agriculture in Iowa and North Dakota and the importance of family farmers in Iowa and North Dakota. We need to find a way to provide a bridge over the differences in this farm bill. We need to decide that at the end of today, or at the end of tomorrow, this Senate will have advanced a compromise into a conference committee that will benefit family-sized farms in this country.

I do not have the magic answer on how to do that. But there have been compromise talks over the weekend and last week that make a lot of sense to me. We should take the best features of several different proposals, put them together, and advance a plan that retains permanent farm law. That is very important. It does not pull the safety net out from under family farmers in the long term. It is not a severance pay proposal saying we are going to transition you. Any time somebody from Washington talks about transitioning, it is time to fasten your seatbelt.

I do not want to transition farmers. I want a new family farm program that recognizes the worth and the value of family farmers and this country's future. I want more flexibility. I want up-front advanced payments to help recapitalize family farms. I want all of the things that many of you want in this Chamber. But I want them put in the context of a compact of sorts for the future. I want a compact that says we care about the long-term health of family farms in America.

I took the floor only because I wanted to correct some of the things that have been said. It has been said people have objected to the debate on the farm bill last week and this week. That is not true at all. The farm bill is on the floor. The Senator from Indiana will call it back up. Right now we are in morning business. But the minute the Senator from Indiana or the majority leader comes to the floor, they will call up the farm bill, and it will be pending.

So those who say the farm bill is not before us because people have objected to bringing the bill to the floor do not understand the procedure. The farm bill is pending. The cloture vote is a vote about whether or not we should cut off the amendments that would provide alternatives, including a compromise of the type I have just discussed.

I hope that by the end of today, or tomorrow, no matter what happens on this cloture vote, that all of us, Republicans and Democrats, can do what we have done for 30 or 40 years in this Chamber. I hope we can finish our work by having fashioned a bipartisan compromise. I hope that we have created a farm bill that will work for the advantage and the betterment of family farms and our country's future. If we do that, we will all have done something worthwhile for rural America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. LUGAR addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, in behalf of the majority leader, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business until the hour of 3:15 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, if I may, to extend my 5-minute period to a 10-minute period of time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I hold up two volumes of legislation because when Congress says it does something, the public at large is cynical about our doing anything, particularly anything that is very complicated, and particularly not just when we finish talking about action on a farm bill. I hold up the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, a 1,800-page document that was put together over a period of about 8 months by 13 different committees—those committees are listed here—in the U.S. Senate to fulfill a promise that the majority party, the Republican Party, made to the people in the 1994 election that we would balance the budget.

This document, scored by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, balances the budget—1,800 pages. It includes welfare reform, saving \$58 billion. It includes the saving of Medicare—the saving of it, the strengthening of it, giving people choice for the first time in that Government program. It has very good tax programs in here. Just balancing this budget will save agriculture 2 percentage points, and any loan in the United States about 2 percentage points, on interest.

This also includes the agriculture bill that would have been a 7-year agriculture program. If the President had not vetoed this bill in early December last year, we would not be debating farm legislation, and we would not only have a farm bill that would be good for agriculture, but we would also have a lot of other tax policies and interest policies that would be even more beneficial to agriculture—and to the entire country, for that matter—than even maybe the farm bill would be beneficial to agriculture.

So here is last year's product to balance the budget—1,800 pages. The President vetoed it. He has a constitutional right to veto it. But one person stood in the way last year of our having a farm program, and that was the