

'Fiscally Irresponsible'

Congressman Blasts Congress

U. S. Congressman Cass Ballenger Wednesday blasted Congress as "fiscally irresponsible" and blamed political maneuvering as the reason legislators can't come up with a balanced budget.

The 10th District Republican made the remarks at the luncheon meeting of Kings Mountain Board of Realtors.

He said he supports a proposal to give members of Congress four-year terms instead of two-year terms and that they be limited to serving a total of 12 years and defended his vote for a pay raise for himself and other members of Congress because the bill included an ethics package which prohibits Congressmen from accepting honorariums and cuts out any outside income. He called the bill a "good way to clean house."

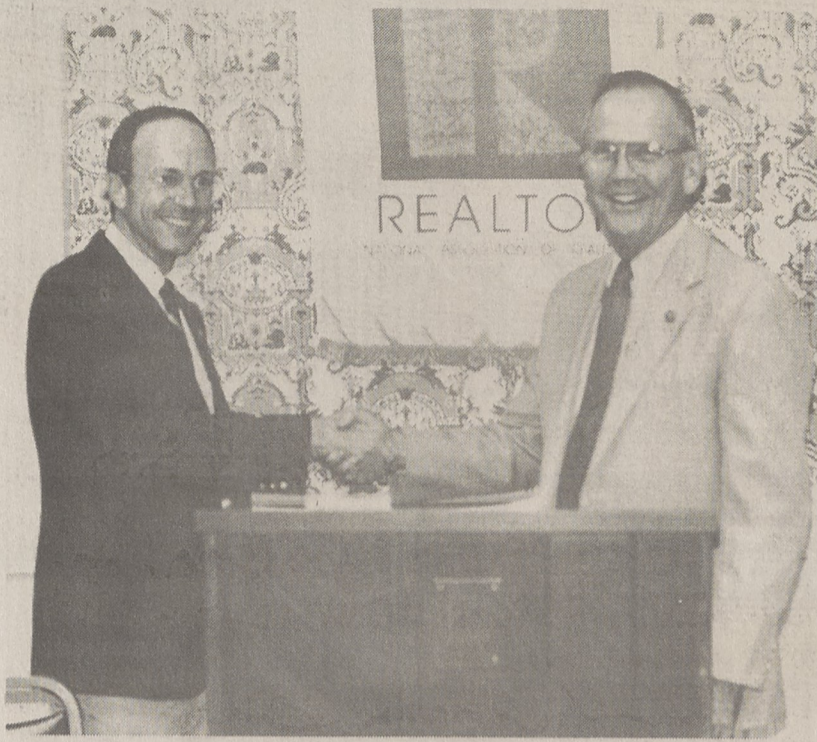
"What's wrong with Congress is Congress," he told the crowded room of realtors. Extra tables had to be put up by the staff of Holiday Inn to handle the crowd.

One of the proposals coming before the 101st Congress is raising gasoline taxes. "We can't do that now because the Persian Gulf crisis has put the screws on everything. He said that when Congress returns to Washington in September that he expects dozens of bills to deal with prize gouging by oil companies.

Responding to questions, Ballenger said the S&L crisis with the U. S. taxpayers bailing out depositors is turning into one of the country's worst nightmares. "We are losing a billion dollars a month."

Some other remarks he made during the question-answer session following his speech:

+Ballenger voted for the Vento-Ridge amendment (H. R. 1180) which passed the House by 418-2. This bill would add a risk-based premium surcharge of 0.5 percent per year to the current 3.8 percent premium surcharge on loans with less than a 10 percent down payment. The bill would require homebuyers to pay two-thirds of their closing costs in cash. Currently these can be financed through the term of the loan. The Senate approved similar legislation last month, he said. Ballenger said



REALTORS HEAR BALLENGER-Kings Mountain Board of Realtors President Bobby Maner, left, welcomes U.S. Congressman Cass Ballenger to Wednesday's meeting of the Board of Realtors.

the Vento/Ridge amendment would increase the capital ratio of the MMIF to 1.25 percent in 24 months and up to 2.0 percent within 10 years. The amendment would create a pay-as-you-go system, including a 1.35 percent up front premium that could be financed, and an annual premium of 0.06 percent over the life of the loan. In addition, it would maintain the current down payment requirement and financing of closing costs. No mortgage would be allowed to exceed the market value of the property. Ballenger said the most likely action will include a joint House/Senate conference committee to meet to work out the differences in the two bills.

+Ballenger is a co-sponsor of H. R. 461, a bill to reduce the capital gains tax from 28 percent to 15 percent, and H. R. 719, a bill to index the cost basis of capital gains for inflation. He said that Republicans in the House will be pushing hard to make sure a capital gains reduction is included in the end-of-the-year omnibus budget bill.

+Ballenger is co-sponsor of H.

Con. Res. 37 which states that the mortgage interest deduction should not be eliminated or further limited. He said he wants to go on record in support of the deduction and announce his opposition to any proposal to tamper with it.

+One area of concern for realtors, he said, is a proposal to restrict or eliminate the federal tax deduction for state and local income property taxes for joint filers with a \$10,000 cap. This was one of several different tax options under review. He said it was leaked in the media and never officially placed on the table for discussion but said that because of opposition it doesn't look like it will be seriously considered.

+He opposes passage of H. R. 4000, Civil Rights Act of 1990. The Senate approved its version of the bill on July 18 by vote of 65-34. The House passed the vote by 272-154 on Aug. 3. The President has indicated he would veto H.R. 4000 because the bill mandates quotas and advocates essentially unlimited compensatory and punitive damages. The House vote was 12 short of the two-thirds needed to override a veto. The Senate vote was within two votes of the 67 nec-

essary to override.

Ballenger says he supports a more fair and reasonable bipartisan substitute. He said the language of the bill would push employers into setting statistical formulas for both hiring and promotions as the only way to protect themselves from costly litigation. As a result, the use of quotas would be necessary "safe harbor" for employers.

+He predicted that U. S. troops would be in Saudi Arabia for some time and estimated the high costs of keeping the military there at \$400 million a day.

+Ballenger said he felt the federal government should quit loaning money to college students because they are not paying the money back. "We are losing a billion dollars a year to student loan defaults," he said.

+Negotiations on the budget have reached a stalemate. The House has approved 10 appropriations bills that increased spending by over \$41 billion over 1989 levels. Seventeen amendments have been added to reduce spending.

Had these amendment passed over \$18 billion in spending would have been cut. In order words, government spending would only have increased by \$23 billion rather than \$41 billion. Given an estimated budget deficit of \$168 billion for fiscal year 1991, this is not a radical idea, he said.

+In an earlier meeting of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce in Shelby, Ballenger said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will complete feasibility study on a proposed Upper Cleveland lake project next month. The proposed reservoir would be located north of Polkville on the First Broad River. He was optimistic about funding for the project but he said the big question remains the price tag of such a reservoir.

Bobby Maner, President of the Board of Realtors, introduced the Congressman and also recognized N. C. Representative John Weatherly and KM Mayor Kyle Smith as special guests.

During the business meeting, Realtors voted to allow the executive committee to set the annual dues of members without allowing a vote of the membership. Realtor Joe Smith cast the only dissenting vote. Maner said the action was necessary to include higher costs of meals for luncheon meetings and to comply with national guidelines.

Retired KM Mail Carrier Honored For Safe Driving

Retired rural mail carrier Bill McDaniel has an enviable driving record-one million miles of safe driving without a chargeable accident.

McDaniel was presented the award from the North Carolina Safety Council Monday in a presentation by Postmaster Mike Howard in front of McDaniel's "old station" in the mailroom of the U. S. Postoffice on Gaston Street.

McDaniel retired on Sept. 1, 1989 after 30 years with the Kings Mountain Postoffice.

But, he hasn't stopped driving. Since retirement he is racking up the miles as a tour driver for American Charters of Gastonia and he and his wife, Helen, have taken numerous Kings Mountain area families on tours of scenic areas from as far distant as Nova Scotia, Canada, Lake Michigan, New York City, and on Friday will depart for a nine-day tour of Boston, Massachusetts.

The Bethlehem Community native went to work for American Charters about eight years ago on a part-time basis. McDaniel has recorded more than 200,000 miles



LOGS MILLION MILES SAFELY-Retired mailman Bill McDaniel, left, is presented his safety plaque from the N. C. Safety Council after logging one million miles of safe driving during his 30-year tenure with Kings Mountain Post Office. KM Postmaster Mike Howard makes the presentation.

on the big tour bus which seats from 38-44 passengers.

McDaniel also retired last year after service on the Kings Mountain Board of Education, for a number of years as chairman.

"I still find things to do and I

drive the bus when they can find me," he said, laughing, but admitting that he and his wife enjoy meeting new friends and the travel program has given them in retirement an opportunity to visit new places.

Enrollment From Page 1-A

12th grades, it was an excellent opening of school," McRae said. "Our teachers and staff members worked tremendously hard to get ready and I've heard a lot of good comments from all the schools."

McRae said he can't pinpoint why the enrollment increased so much.

"We weren't really expecting that many more students," he said. "I thought we may have 15 or 20 more at most. I'm not sure if it's citizens moving in or what but they've come from somewhere. I do think we've had an increase in people wanting to come from other systems but that won't account for all of them.

"It's been a real good start," he added. "Anytime you go into the kind of changes we've had this year there are some complications. But our people have worked real hard and the parents have been cooperative."

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