

desk was Senator Charles McNary of Oregon.

Senator WYDEN's desk also has a long history. And I note that the last 13 Senators to have occupied it were Republicans, and hope that some of that heritage will rub off on Senator WYDEN.

Finally, let me admit that it is no secret that Senate Republicans were hoping for different results in Oregon's very close election.

But I take heart in the fact that even though Senator WYDEN is the 47th Democrat Senator, he is also the fourth Senator in this Chamber to have been born in Kansas, and certainly that will help him a lot here.

Senators KASSEBAUM, SPECTER, and myself welcome you to the Kansas caucus, Senator WYDEN, and we will get back to you later about the time and place of our next meeting.

[Applause.]

#### RECESS

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:53 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer [Mr. COATS].

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### THE FARM BILL

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I support the freedom-to-farm concept. Most farmers in South Dakota that I have talked to want the freedom-to-farm concept.

The Senate is in a filibuster situation, although the word "filibuster" is not being used. We are not being allowed to proceed to the farm bill by the Democrats. We must produce 60 votes in order to proceed. We apparently do not have 60 votes, at least not up to this point.

People should understand that many of us want to pass a farm bill. If we were permitted to proceed to the bill, we could then start offering amendments and begin discussion. However, the other side is not allowing the farm bill to come up.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to consider supporting S. 1541, the Agricultural Market Transition Act. Should cloture not be invoked on S. 1541, I urge my colleagues to support the compromise offered by the Senators from Idaho and Vermont, Senator CRAIG and Senator LEAHY. Their amendment incorporates all of S. 1541 and includes a number of other reforms. If we do not have the Freedom to Farm Act, we could have the Leahy-Craig substitute, which has the freedom to farm but includes a number of reforms.

Mr. President, I was recently back home in South Dakota and spent time

talking to farmers about what needs to be accomplished in future farm programs. The message was loud and clear: flexibility, certainty, and less Government involvement. Both S. 1541 and the Craig-Leahy compromise would provide all of those things.

Mr. President, S. 1541 would provide greater economic stability to producers. Producers in South Dakota are telling me not to extend the 1990 farm bill, and by all means do not let the underlying 1949 act be the operative act for 1996. After careful review, many producers say, support S. 1541.

There will be a lot of unwarranted criticism expressed over S. 1541. Those opposed to the bill say we need a permanent safety net for farmers. I say there is nothing permanent about Federal farm policy. The past farm bills were not permanent. All generally covered periods of 4 or 5 years.

Mr. President, S. 1541 would provide a 7-year plan. Unless economic conditions warrant an earlier revisitation of Federal farm policy, we will no doubt be putting together a new farm bill in 2002. So S. 1541 does not eliminate the real safety net for farmers, which, frankly, is the Congress itself. Those people who say there will be no farm programs after 7 years simply are not shooting straight. Past farm bills never carried assurance of future farm products except for 1938 and 1949 Agricultural Acts.

Mr. President, let me summarize my position. Congress should pass a farm bill now. We are ready to act. It is my recommendation if we cannot adopt the freedom-to-farm bill, we should adopt the Leahy-Craig substitute, which is the freedom-to-farm bill with amendments. We cannot even adopt amendments to that since there is basically a filibuster going on here. We have to produce 60 votes in order to proceed.

I implore my colleagues to let us proceed on the farm bill, offer amendments, as we have in the past in good faith here, in a bipartisan way. Let us amend the Craig-Leahy substitute. We are ready to go.

Our farmers are ready to go to the fields soon to plant. They are making their plans with their bankers now. They need certainty.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan and others have estimated that commodity prices in the next 5 years will be very high because of demand in China and other demand overseas. The biggest farm bill we could adopt is probably a balanced budget, because if we have a balanced budget we will have low-interest rates for farmers and businessmen. We also will have a stable dollar for international trade. I believe we can have a booming agriculture for the next 5 years if we have a balanced budget and if we move toward the concepts in freedom to farm.

Mr. President, our farmers want flexibility—that is to be able to plant new crops and different crops. If we

continue to go with a regulated Government system, the Department of Agriculture defines which crops must be planted. Indeed, it is true that wheat and corn are probably best suited to much of our soil. But who is to say that some new crop might not be experimented with and might come forth.

It is said if we have the Freedom to Farm Act that, after 7 years, the farmers will be left on their own. That is not necessarily true. Just like with a 5-year farm bill, the Congress does something new afterward. If the Congress in 7 years finds that the farmers are in need of it, they can pass a farm bill. They can even reinstitute the present farm bill if they wish. So that is not a good argument.

In talking to my farmers in South Dakota, they like freedom to farm. My farmers like the concept of flexibility of crops. The farmers in South Dakota like the concept of doing away with all the paperwork and Government regulation that has built up around this program.

There are those who would say we should not abolish the 1938 and 1949 Agricultural Acts. I disagree. It is time to abolish those acts because they are obsolete. Now is the time for forward thinking reforms. We should not be in a position of carrying forward outdated and ineffective 50-year-old farm policies as the basis for agricultural planning in the 21st century.

Opponents of S. 1541 want to extend existing farm policy for 1 or 2 years. Mr. President, the one thing my producers have made abundantly clear is they do not want the Federal Government telling them what they can or cannot plant, and making other decisions for them. They want, and deserve, full flexibility. An extension of existing policy means that Government will continue to dictate farming practices. This simply is unacceptable.

Under S. 1541, producers would have greater planting flexibility. Producers would have the opportunity to respond to market conditions. This is vital for their economic survival. Opportunities would be endless. Producers would not lose payments if they decided to plant new and innovative crops.

Mr. President, S. 1541 is supported by the South Dakota Farm Bureau, the South Dakota Corn Growers, and many farmers throughout South Dakota. They see great opportunities for them in their operations. A recent study by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute showed that S. 1541 would bring higher prices for corn, soybeans, and all livestock over the next 10 years. Current high prices for wheat also would be maintained.

Under S. 1541, net farm income is estimated to increase from \$38 to \$50.4 billion in 10 years. In addition, farm program payments would be reduced from \$6.4 billion in 1995 to \$5.04 billion in 2005. In short, S. 1541 would increase farm incomes while lowering farm program costs to our taxpayers. That is a great deal.