

a right to expect this be brought to the floor for a debate and a vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I think we have 30 minutes assigned in morning business. I want to begin to talk about what I think is a very big issue; that is, the appropriations discussions that will take place on the Interior and related agencies which will start after morning business.

I would like to yield to my friend, the Senator from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We have time reserved for the Senator from Wisconsin. The Chair was alternating back and forth.

Mr. THOMAS. It was my understanding that we had an hour of time and half was ours and half of it was already used.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. They have time remaining. The Senate had a late start.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, if I could be of help, it is my understanding they have 30 minutes and, subsequent to that, Senator REID and I will each have 10 minutes. That is my understanding of the unanimous consent agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Thank you, Mr. President. I thank the Senator from Wisconsin and I thank Senator THOMAS from Wyoming.

#### THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I just want to talk for a brief bit of time on the Interior appropriations bill and on some matters that are very important to people throughout this country, particularly in the West. But let me begin by making a comment about what the Senator from North Dakota has just said. In fact, he has said that he is going to threaten to bring the business of the Senate to a halt unless he gets his way, and what he wants to do is have a debate on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

There are a lot of important things facing this country. But to quote from the President of the United States, who very recently gave a talk about putting first things first, it seems to me that most of the American people would like to put first things first, and that would include matters such as the continuation of the running of the Government for the next year which would require us to pass appropriations bills to fund the various Departments of the Government, not the least of which is the Department of the Interior which is what we are going to be talking about next. There will be plenty of time to debate the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

But in terms of the priority of this country, I think our colleagues need to understand that treaty can't even go into effect until 100 percent of the major countries of the world sign it. There are many countries that haven't signed it. It is going to be years before that treaty goes into effect. There is no rush for the United States to have to take up that treaty.

To be threatened with stopping all business of the Senate until it can debate the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, I hope my colleague will reconsider his position on that. We talk about what I consider to be first things first, and that would be to finish our business here, which is, first of all, to get the appropriations bills passed and sent to the President for his consideration.

#### INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, one of the appropriations bills we have yet to act upon is the Interior appropriations bill, as Senator THOMAS pointed out. He comes from the State of Wyoming. I come from the State of Arizona. Practically every State west of the Mississippi is significantly impacted by this bill because, as I am sure you are well aware, Mr. President, coming from the State of Montana, more than a third of this Nation's lands are owned by the Federal Government. Most of those are in the western United States. Many of those lands are under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior.

This is an extraordinarily important bill for the people of our States. I just want to discuss one aspect of it that is very important for my State of Arizona and other States in the western United States.

We have a very difficult condition in our national forests now. They have been probably—I think it is not too strong a term—"mismanaged" over the years. It has been a combination of things. It has been the combination of the Forest Service, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, the grazing on public lands, the way that fire suppression has taken off, and some other things which have resulted in the condition where, instead of healthy forests of large trees that have great environmental value and value to the other flora and fauna in the forest and which present a relatively safe situation in terms of forest fires, we now have a situation in the West where our forests are literally becoming overgrown.

They are becoming so thick and dense with small-growth trees that:

(A) They are very fire prone.

(B) They are not resistant at all to disease and to insects.

(C) They are not environmentally pleasing at all.

(D) None of the trees grow up to be very large because they are all competing for the moisture and the nutrients in the soil.

The net result is a situation that is very different from that which pertained at the turn of the century when we had very healthy forests of very large trees that were spaced quite a distance apart, with meadows in between, with a lot of good grass that livestock and wild animals could graze on, and which were not prone to forest fire because the fire would work along the ground when it occurred. It would reduce the fuel load on the ground, but it would never get to be the kind of crown fire we have just seen on television that has been experienced in several States in the West, not the least of which is in California.

You get the crown fires when you have a lot of brush on the ground. You have these small, dense trees and many come under the boughs of the great big trees. The fire starts on the ground and goes right up to the crown of the other trees. We have all seen from those television pictures the explosive power of the fires. It is a horrendous situation. It threatens life and limb as well as the destruction of the forest and all that is within it.

We have to find a way to better manage our forests. We have been for some time urging the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior to work on a management program which essentially involves the thinning of these small-diameter trees, leaving the large-diameter trees—leaving the old growth but thinning out the small-diameter trees, and then doing controlled burns to get rid of the fuel load, and after that letting nature take its course.

We have found from experimentation—primarily through Northern Arizona University, Dr. Walley Covington, and others who have done the research and demonstration projects we have funded—that the trees become more healthy. The pitch content of the trees increases significantly. So they are less susceptible to bark beetles and other kinds of insect damage. The grasses grow up underneath the trees as they didn't do before. The protein content of the grasses is significantly higher. So it is much better grazing for the forest animals. In every respect, from an environmental point of view, it is a better situation than that which pertains today.

This takes money because you have to pay to go in and do the thinning. Each one of these projects requires a substantial amount of money.

So far, the research has been done on small plots of land. But according to the General Accounting Office, we have about 25 to 30 years maximum to treat all of our forests or we are going to be into a contagion situation with very little hope of saving these forests. In fact, we have about 39 million acres of national forest lands in the interior West that are at high risk of catastrophic fire, and only this brief period of maybe 25 years to effectively manage these forests.