

reaching the authorization of the funds available. Certainly that authorization is not totally enough to fill all the needs, but it is an improvement over the past.

This also gives an opportunity for those counties to create their own financial structure, much of which often is tourism, which, again, is costly. I thank the committee for what they have done with respect to payments in lieu of taxes to the counties. I hope we are able to include that. Our allocation is larger than the House and we need to bring that up so we have a satisfactory arrangement.

In the West we have had 3 years of very low rainfall, actual drought. It is very difficult. In Washington, it is normal to have 50 inches of rain a year. In Wyoming, it is more likely to be an average of 16 or 17 inches. It is a low precipitation area at best. Therefore, we irrigate. Irrigation water generally comes from reservoirs, from the runoff of snowfall that is captured in the mountains and let down during the summer. We have had relatively slow snowfall over the last several years and therefore our reservoirs are getting low and have been very low this year. We have had, certainly, a bona fide drought problem—not only in Wyoming but all through the area, including the Dakotas and down. There has been a great deal of discussion about it. On the Agriculture Committee we talked about that a great deal. The Agriculture Committee bill as prepared does not deal with drought. We think they will get support in the area of crops, but it is based primarily on loans after the product is sold. If you did not produce a product, there is nothing there. That is why we need to have disaster assistance. There will be less spending in the Agriculture bill because there will be less crops grown—with a higher price because there are less—but many farmers and ranchers will not produce a crop.

We should offset some of that to the farm bill spending. Whether we offset it or not, the fact is there will be less money spent in that area than could be spent. Therefore, what we spend here could replace what was there. I hope that is the approach we take.

We should have some limitation on how much we have there, but, indeed, it is a big issue and it will be a \$5.5 billion issue to be able to deal with the losses that agriculture has suffered.

I hope, too, we do not simply focus on farm crops. Again, in my State, the biggest agricultural area is livestock. Livestock people have suffered as well. What has happened is there is no grass for grazing where the cattle are on private lands. In some cases where there has been grazing allowed, in the forests or BLM, Federal lands, there has not been a sufficient amount of grass. Ranchers have had to sell cattle because they have not had the feed and will not have the feed this winter.

When we do talk about agriculture, the idea often—particularly in some

Midwestern States—is that just refers to farmers. I want to tell you it is farmers, but it is also those who raise livestock, cattle, and sheep. People who are in that business need to be recognized as well, in terms of what we do here to help the agricultural industry during the drought. We will be dealing with that. We will come back to it.

I say again I hope we can set some priorities for the relatively limited amount of time left of this Congress. I hope that we select those items that are timely, that need to be done. I understand when we come to the end of a session everybody has ideas of things that they would like to have happened that did not happen, but we are not going to be able to do all those things. So what we have to do collectively is show some leadership as to which of those issues should be dealt with. Then we can do that.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LINCOLN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GRANDPARENTS DAY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, first, on a personal basis, earlier, at the opening of the session, it was noted that yesterday was Grandparents Day. I send my best to all those who are grandparents. The Presiding Officer, of course, is far too young to know the joys of that time in our lives. She does have the joy of two of the most beautiful children anybody has seen in the Senate family. But there will be a day when the other will come. The ranking member and I have the joy of being grandparents.

So I wish all grandparents the best and also extend special wishes to one growing, shameless Leahy.

After that outrageous usurpation of the podium, Madam President, probably, if my wife is watching, she is probably beginning to wonder if I took too much time off in August.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent regarding the time of the chairman and the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee that was originally set to be half an hour evenly divided, that we still have that half hour evenly divided, and the vote then begin after the expiration of that time.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KENNETH A. MARRA, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 1 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will proceed to executive session and proceed with the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 889, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read that nomination of Kenneth A. Marra, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I do believe that Judge Kenneth Marra will be confirmed to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. I have heard of no opposition. This is a judge who got strong bipartisan support in the Senate Judiciary Committee, which usually guarantees a confirmation on the floor. When that happens, the Democratic-led Senate will confirm its 74th judicial nomination made by President George W. Bush. This will also be the 25th judicial emergency vacancy that we have filled since I became chairman last summer, and the 18th since the beginning of this year.

The confirmation of Judge Marra will bring additional resources to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. Judge Marra was nominated to fill a new position Congress created by statute to address the large caseload, particularly the immigration and criminal cases, facing the Federal court in Florida. He is one of three Federal judicial nominations on the Senate Calendar for action.

I recall during the past administration, the Clinton administration, we all worked very hard in cooperation with Senator GRAHAM and Senator MACK to ensure that the Federal court in Florida had its vacancies filled promptly with consensus nominees. Due to the bipartisan cooperation between one Democrat Senator and one Republican Senator and a Democratic President, the Senate was able to confirm 22 judicial nominees from Florida, including 3 nominees to the Eleventh Circuit. But it is unfortunate that this tradition of cooperation, coordination, and consultation has not continued with the current administration.

By my recollection, it was only the nomination of Judge Rosemary Barkett of the Florida Supreme Court to the Eleventh Circuit that generated any significant controversy or opposition. I do recall that she was strongly