

some sort of understanding reached with the majority leader.

I wanted to say this. The underlying bill is very important, the agriculture appropriations bill. It does not, however, contain the emergency response to the farm crisis that we must add to it at some point here. I hope we will do it in a bipartisan way. But the interest that Senator DASCHLE has in trying to move forward with debate on the Patients' Bill of Rights doesn't in any way diminish the interest and importance of the agriculture appropriations bill.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, if I may respond. Frankly, I was surprised that this Patients' Bill of Rights amendment was offered to this bill. All that had been indicated was that it would be offered this week if some agreement was not worked out.

First of all, I want to make it clear that I am willing and very anxious to make a reasonable agreement. No. 2, this is not the only bill that was going to be up this week. There would have been—or there will be other opportunities. That is what surprised me, the fact that the agriculture appropriations bill was the bill to which the Patients' Bill of Rights issue was added. That was a surprise because I thought there would be a real strong feeling that we should move forward on the agriculture appropriations bill without it being delayed or deferred or impacted by other issues. That does not diminish at all the importance of patients' rights, but I thought there would have been another bill or another way that it could have been offered. So I, frankly, was surprised—I am not saying it was sort of a surprise attack; I don't mean that at all. I am just surprised the decision was made to offer it to the agriculture appropriations bill when we could have offered it or it could have been offered by others on other bills this week.

Mr. DORGAN. One additional question. I will not belabor the point, except I was with Senator DASCHLE, along with my colleagues, last Thursday. He made it clear to everybody here in the Capitol what his intention was for this week. There would not have been a need to submit this amendment today on any bill had there been an agreement last week.

But let me also say when we get to the agriculture appropriations bill, at some point there is going to be lengthy debate about the emergency response that we need to do with respect to this farm crisis.

Let me finally make this point. We will, I assume, at some point have a full debate on the Patients' Bill of Rights. It will be a debate with amendments offered by both sides—not amendments cleared by anyone, not amendments in which someone is being a gatekeeper and which people have an opportunity to say here is how we feel

about this issue. That is going to happen sooner or later.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, if I could reclaim my time, I am glad to try to enter an agreement as to how this issue would be handled. We are ready to go. But the comment about gatekeeper—we have a lot of important work to do here. Agriculture, obviously, is a very important issue, and State Department authorization is very important, and intelligence authorization is very important. We have appropriations bills we need to move through. We have a limited amount of time in which to do that. We have this week and next week before the Fourth of July recess. Therefore, there must be some reasonable understanding, some reasonable agreement about how much time or what amendments will be offered. We do that all the time. Every Senator knows we enter into agreements to limit amendments or limit time. If we can get that worked out, then we will go forward. The alternative is that we can have debate on this tomorrow, and we can have a couple of votes and sort of see where we are and then decide how to proceed after that.

But I believe we have broad support outside of this Chamber and in the Senate for the alternative that we have. Great work has been done by Dr. FRIST and Senator COLLINS and Senator JEFFORDS, a broad group within our conference working with Senators from all regions of the country who understand this problem. We are ready to do it. As soon as you can decide you are ready to have a vote on the merits of the two packages pending, with a reasonable number of amendments, we will do that.

We are going to have to get some order as to how that is done, and we will do that or we will just vote on the packages as they are and let that happen. I think we can keep wrangling back and forth. I invite others to join in the opportunity to discuss exactly the substance of the two bills and also how we will handle them.

I see the chairman is here, and Senator SPECTER from Pennsylvania is here, and others. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

STEEL IMPORT LIMITATIONS

Mr. SPECTER. Madam President, I have sought recognition to speak relatively briefly on the steel import limitation bill; a cloture vote on the motion to proceed is scheduled tomorrow at 12:15. I will be engaged in committee hearings at that time, so I have sought a few minutes this afternoon to express my support to impose cloture on the steel import limitation bill.

Similar legislation passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 289-141. While this is a strong measure, a so-

called quota bill, I believe it reflects the necessity that strong action be taken to enforce U.S. trade laws to stop an avalanche of dumping by foreign countries.

We have seen the disintegration of the American steel industry, the decimation of the American steel industry by unfair foreign imports. Twenty years ago, in 1979, approximately 453,000 steelworkers were employed. Today that figure is about 160,000. Some \$50 billion has been invested by the American steel industry to modernize, but there is no way that the American steel industry can compete with dumped goods. When I say "dumped goods" I mean goods which come into the United States from a number of countries—from Russia, from Brazil, from Ukraine, from South Africa, from China—where they are sold for less than they are sold for in the exporting country; that is, sold for less than the United States and sold for less than Russia, which is sending them to the United States, and sold for less than the cost of production.

The situation requires a change. I will quote extensively from a letter sent by 12 executives from American steel companies to the Secretary of Commerce, responding to a comment by the Secretary of Commerce last week that the steel crisis is over—so said Secretary Daley. This letter, dated June 18, 1999, from the executives of 12 American steel companies, says, in pertinent part, the following:

The steel crisis is still very much with us. Imports volumes are down from the disastrous levels of 1998 but are still very high by historic standards. The surge of imports in 1998 caused inventories to balloon to extremely high levels. These inventories have seriously depressed prices up until the present and will continue to do so until these stocks have been worked down. Moreover, cold-rolled imports are up dramatically through April of this year, 24% above the level of the first four months of last year. Imports of cut-to-length plate are up dramatically—25% year-to-year for this period.

Prices remain extremely depressed. The producer price index for all steel mill products is down 9% (1999:Q2/1998:Q2). This is the largest decline in nearly 20 years. Prices for hot-rolled sheet, cold-rolled sheet and plate are down 11% and 15% respectively.

Operating rates have plunged from 93% to 80% between January and December 1998 and have remained at that depressed level through the first half of 1999. The decline in operating rates equates to about \$2 billion in lost revenue in the second half of last year. On an annualized basis, a 10% change in operating rate equals about \$5 billion in revenue.

The depressed prices and operating rates caused most American steel companies to post losses in the most recent quarter. Several steel companies have been forced into bankruptcy. Thousands of those who were laid off due to unfairly traded imports are still out of work. Many thousands have seen their workweeks shortened and are still not back to full time.

For our industry, therefore, this crisis is very real.

The steel industry started some seven actions for antidumping, and six of those were subjected to suspension agreements by the Department of Commerce, to the detriment of the steel companies.

I ask unanimous consent this chart on steel imports and suspension agreements be printed at the conclusion of my statement.

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

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. SPECTER. The result of steel import limitations, so-called quotas, is a drastic remedy. We have seen not only steel but other industries in the United States victimized by the failure to enforce U.S. trade laws.

For the past 15 years, this Senator has proposed legislation which would authorize equitable relief to provide for enforcement of the U.S. trade laws. At the present time, if complaints are filed with the International Trade Commission, it takes up to a year or longer to have those matters resolved. An equitable action, a court of equity, would result in having these matters resolved in the course of a few weeks. Until that is done, it seems to me we need to take some very decisive action.

That is why I have cosponsored the steel import limitation bill. I urge closure on the motion to proceed be invoked when this matter comes up for a vote tomorrow at 12:15.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. SPECTER. I yield.

Mr. DORGAN. I intend to support the legislation the Senator just described. The Senator from Pennsylvania described a condition with the steel industry that relates to, among other things, the lack of enforcement of trade laws.

In North Dakota, we don't produce steel. We don't have a foundry that produces a substantial amount of steel. We don't have steelworkers. However, we have farmers in almost exactly the same set of circumstances. At least part of that reason is because of bad trade agreements, or trade agreements that have not been enforced.

A number of Senators, I am sure, will support the initiative tomorrow. I think tomorrow is actually a vote on the motion to proceed. I believe it is important to stand up for our economic interests.

It is not about protectionism; it is about standing up for our country's economic interests and making sure we

enforce trade laws. If someone is dumping in our country—whether it is steel or wheat—we ought to expect, as a steel industry or as family farmers, that our Federal Government will take action to enforce our trade laws.

I agree with the statement of the Senator from Pennsylvania. I think a number of Senators, tomorrow, will be in agreement on that basic premise.

I thank the Senator for yielding.

Mr. SPECTER. If I may respond briefly, I thank my colleague from North Dakota for that statement.

I had presented legislation on equitable relief before the Finance Committee. The Senate's colleague, Senator CONRAD, is a member, and he made the same statement about the similarity in wheat.

At lunch today, CONRAD BURNS was talking about similar problems in Montana. I will send a copy of the equitable legislation which I think would cover many products. We will have an overwhelming response in this body so that our trade laws are enforced, consistent with GATT, but put teeth in an enforcement mechanism which is not present today.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1.—STEEL IMPORTS AND SUSPENSION AGREEMENTS—SUMMARY OF FLAT-ROLLED SUSPENSION AGREEMENTS

Year of filing and product	Country	Final adjusted margins (percent)	By metric tons—		Dollar amount per metric tons—		
			Suspension agreement volumes	Estimated volumes w/ orders	Agreement minimum price	Estimated fair price	Current import value
1996—Plate CTL	China	17 to 129	141,000	0	\$308	\$505	\$397
1996—Plate CTL	Russia	54 to 185	94,000	6,466	\$275 to \$330	505	352
1996—Plate CTL	S. Africa	26 to 51	NA	3,150	NA	505	331
1996—Plate CTL	Ukraine	81 to 238	148,520	32,151	\$314 to \$466	505	516
1998—Hot-Rolled	Russia	71 to 218	750,000	28,933	\$255	397	236
1998—Hot-Rolled	Brazil	51 to 71	295,000	310	NA	397	227

Mr. HELMS addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT, FISCAL YEARS 2000 AND 2001

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 689

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the State Department authorization and the Sarbanes amendment, numbered 689.

Mr. HELMS. That is before modification; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It has not yet been modified.

Mr. HELMS. Let me inquire, is the modification that I understand has been agreed to—do both sides agree to it? I know our side does, but I would not want to do anything against the wish of Senator SARBANES.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 689, AS MODIFIED

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, I send to the desk a modification of amendment No. 689 and ask it be stated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Carolina [Mr. HELMS], for Mr. SARBANES, proposes an amendment numbered 689, as modified:

On page 39, line 11, insert after "action" the following: "that includes a suspension of more than five days".

On page 41, line 16, strike "one year" and all that follows through the end of line 22 and insert the following: "two years after the occurrence giving rise to the grievance or, in the case of a grievance with respect to the grievant's rater or reviewer, one year after the date on which the grievant ceased to be subject to rating or review by that person, but in no case less than two years after the occurrence giving rise to the grievance.".

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, the majority leader desires, and I want to accommodate him in this, that this amendment be the rollcalled amendment at 5:30.

I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent there be no further amendment to the pending amendment.

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

Mr. HELMS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, I just discussed this with the Senator. I need