

subcommittee, for the excellent work he has done on that subcommittee. I compliment the ranking member, Senator MIKULSKI, for the work she does. When she was chairman of that subcommittee, she was one of the best subcommittee chairmen—I don't say chairperson—she was one of the best chairmen that we had of any subcommittee.

I did not want this day to pass without this lowly ranking member having an opportunity to say some good words about the people who are entitled to commendation. It doesn't make any difference to me whether they are Republicans or Democrats. If they are entitled to commendation, I give it to them.

So I applaud you, Mr. Chairman, not only for doing a good job but for being the fair and considerate Senator that you are, and also a fair and considerate chairman as well. Again, I have to say some good words about Senator BOND, Senator MIKULSKI. They could not be better. They could not be more fair. They could not be more considerate.

They are hamstrung, as you are, Mr. Chairman, by the fact that we do not have enough money. I am for raising the caps. I am for telling the American people the truth. We need more money. Let's raise those caps. I am not a bit backwards about saying I support raising the caps. We have to meet the people's needs. I hope we will get around to that. I think we are going to have to do that before it is over.

I thank Senators for their patience for listening, but I wanted to get in my two cents' worth of commendations also.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator very much.

Mr. BYRD. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. I am sure Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BOND appreciate those kind words from the Senator from West Virginia as much as I do. I do thank the Senator for his cooperation and willingness to work with me as chairman of this committee. It is a distinct honor to follow him as chairman.

We should mention, on our side, the help of Paul Carliner, Jeannine Schroeder, and Sean Smith, who worked with Senator MIKULSKI. This has been a very fine working team. Senator BOND, Senator MIKULSKI, and the team of both the majority and minority have worked very hard to meet the needs of the agencies and the American people under this bill, under some very difficult circumstances in regard to ceilings and limits under which they had to live. I, again, emphasize the Budget Committee has filed a statement saying this bill is within the budget.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1402

Mr. STEVENS. I now ask unanimous consent H.R. 1402 be placed on the calendar. That is the class 1 milk structure bill.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein up to 10 minutes each.

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

The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, again I thank the members of the VA-HUD appropriations subcommittee and the full committee for their good work. Also, I am pleased we were able to work out an agreement as to how we could proceed for the remainder of the day. We have now completed action on the VA-HUD appropriations bill. The education issue that was being discussed earlier by Senator DASCHLE, Senator GREGG, and Senator KENNEDY, and others who will be commenting in a few minutes, those two issues will be considered back-to-back on Monday.

There will, obviously, be no further votes today. The next votes will occur at 5:30 on Monday. As it now stands, there will be two votes at that time.

The Senate has done good work this week. In addition to completing action on the VA-HUD appropriations bill, after a lot of delay and unnecessary obstruction, in my opinion, we were able to complete the Interior appropriations bill, and we also passed, by an overwhelming vote, the defense authorization conference report for the year—a good bill. Senator WARNER and his Armed Services Committee members, Senator THURMOND, Senator LEVIN, did an excellent job on that bill. I certainly expect and hope the President will sign the defense authorization conference report and, hopefully, the Interior Committee conference will get underway on Monday, and the VA-HUD conference as well.

That leaves only one appropriations bill to be considered in the Senate before all 13 of them will be completed. I believe we are well ahead of where we have been in many years in getting that done. It is actually possible that we could get the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill up by Tuesday or Wednesday of next week and either complete it before the end of the fiscal year or within a day of that, and then, of course, go to conference.

Will it be easy? No. I am sure it is going to be an interesting debate, but

that is as it should be. I look forward to completing that work and moving forward with the appropriations conference reports. I hope there will be one or two conference reports that might be available on Monday. Whenever they become available, we will consider them that day or the next day. Energy and water is close to being completed, I believe, and Agriculture is still in the mill. We hope to get those done.

I do want to emphasize that I think the way we worked out handling this education issue is much better than having it on the VA-HUD appropriations bill. It does not relate to the VA-HUD bill. I did not think it should have been offered on that appropriations bill, even though it was offered as a sense of the Senate. It is better to handle it the way we have agreed to do it.

Senator DASCHLE seemed to question whether we intended to go to the Labor-HHS appropriations bill. I have been saying for weeks we intend to do it. As soon as the committee reports it out, we will have it on the floor as soon as the rules allow. I have been saving next week for its consideration. Education amendments, I am sure, will be offered next week when this bill is considered in the Senate.

REAUTHORIZING THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to comment a bit about education. First, let me lay down a predicate about myself. I feel very strongly about the need for quality, safe, and drug-free education in America. We have lost our edge in education. Our kids are not getting as good an education as they should. In fact, I do not think they are getting as good an education as we were getting in the fifties and sixties. There has unfortunately been a steady decline in our schools. While some schools are doing a little better and some scores are, in many areas our schools are not what they should be.

I said three things: Quality, safe, drug-free schools. We have a lot of work to do in these areas.

I will not stand second to any Member of the Senate when it comes to feeling strongly about education and advocating on behalf of education, but it has to be done in the right way.

What has happened is the education establishment is firmly entrenched in the status quo. They believe that we should stay in this box, and we should not change it and, by the way, it should be run from Washington. That is not the answer, in my opinion.

I want to make this clear: While I think we should have choice in education, I am a product of public education from the first grade through the second, third, and fourth grades where I went to school at Duck Hill, MS, and I had better teachers in the second,