

SENATE—Tuesday, February 8, 2000

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, whose mercies are new every morning and whose presence sustains us through the day, we seek to glorify You in all that we do and say. Your thoughts through this day, guidance for our decisions, vision for the way, courage in adversity, help from above, unfailing empathy, and unlimited love. You never leave us nor forsake us, nor do You ask of us more than You will provide the resources to accomplish. Here are our minds; take Your thoughts through them. Here are our hearts; express Your love and encourage us through them. Here are our voices; speak Your truth through them.

We dedicate this day to discern and do Your will. We trust in You, dear God, and ask You to continue to bless America through the leadership of the women and men of this Senate. Help them as they grapple with problems and grasp Your potential for the crucial issues before them today. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MIKE DEWINE, a Senator from the State of Ohio, led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, on behalf of Majority Leader LOTT, I make the following announcements:

Today, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. Following morning business, it is hoped that consent will be given to begin consideration of S. 1287, the nuclear waste disposal bill. However, if no agreement can be made, cloture on the committee amendment will be scheduled to occur at 2:15 p.m.

By previous consent, the Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 so the weekly party conferences may meet. Senators can expect votes in relation to the nuclear waste bill throughout today's session of the Senate.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

MEASURE PLACED ON CALENDAR—S. 2036

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due its second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the title of the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2036) to make permanent the moratorium on the imposition of taxes on the Internet.

Mr. DEWINE. I object to further proceedings on this bill at this time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROCEEDING ON THE NUCLEAR WASTE BILL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am sorry I was not here when the Senate opened; I wanted to make an announcement.

Senator BRYAN, Senator BINGAMAN, and I are waiting to see the next document prepared on the nuclear waste issue. As soon as that is done, we will be in a position to make the determination as to how we think we should proceed.

I have been in conversation with the minority leader and the majority leader and they know that all of us—Senators MURKOWSKI, BINGAMAN, REID, and BRYAN—are trying to work something out so that we have a document from which we can all take a position. Again I repeat, until that is done, we are going to have to continue waiting until we can determine how to proceed on this issue.

I spoke with Senator MURKOWSKI on several occasions. He and his staff and that of Senator BINGAMAN, the chairman and ranking member of the committee, are coming up with a document that Senator BRYAN and I can review. We hope that is going to be within a matter of hours.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEWINE) The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each. Also under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Illinois.

The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET MESSAGE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday, the President of the United States announced his budget message, which is also the last budget message of the Clinton administration. When you consider the history of this administration, beginning with deep deficits, and we are now at a point in our history where we have had the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States, it is an entirely different budget message.

I still recall when only a few years ago one of our colleagues, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, ORRIN HATCH, came to the floor to say to the assembled Senators that we had reached such a desperate point in American history that we had to amend the Constitution of the United States to put in place what was known as the balanced budget amendment, so that Federal courts would have the authority to stop Congress from spending. It was a desperate move, supported by Democrats and Republicans alike. We had so many years of red ink and so many deficits that many people thought there was no way it was going to get better, short of creating a new constitutional force—the force of the Federal judiciary—to stop the Congress from spending and to require the kind of fiscal discipline for which American families were asking.

What a difference 3 years later. We have debated, over the last year or so, what we are going to do with the surplus, not with the deficit. We are no