

incoming shots from various places, in a quiet, humble, self-effacing, diligent way, HARRY REID is out there finding a solution. I sincerely appreciate the work he has given us and the entire institution over the last year. I enjoy working with him very much.

I am very proud, too, while we have big States, very important States, the little States of Nevada, Mississippi, and South Dakota are hanging in there. We are glad to be able to fill these positions of responsibility.

So I thank them both very sincerely.

THANKING SENATE STAFF

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I send another resolution to the desk on behalf of myself and Senator DASCHLE and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 392) tendering the thanks of the Senate to the Senate Staff for the courteous, dignified, and impartial manner in which they have assisted the deliberations of the Senate.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 392) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 392

Resolved, That the thanks of the Senate are hereby tendered to the Secretary of the Senate, the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, the Secretary for the Majority, the Secretary for the Minority, and the floor staff of the two parties for the courteous, dignified, and impartial manner in which they have assisted the deliberations of the Senate during the second session of the One Hundred Sixth Congress.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to just expound a bit on this resolution. We are deeply indebted to these staff members, including those at the table in front of us. They are so efficient. They are so informed. They save us many times from ourselves. They are here early. They are here late. And, of course, all of the clerks, the Parliamentarians, and the representatives who are here do a magnificent job. We do not always say we appreciate it enough, but we do. We could not make it without them.

This resolution is the very least we could do to say we appreciate them.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, again, I want to identify myself with the remarks of the majority leader. These staff are the best there could be. I thank them, on behalf of the entire Senate, for their hard work, for their

professionalism, for the level of commitment they make each and every time they come to work. I thank them for what they do. There are so many ways we ought to stop throughout the year and express ourselves in as heartfelt a way as we can, but at least now at the end of this Congress, we ought to say—with an exclamation point—thank you.

Thank you for what you do. Thank you for who you are. Thank you for what you give each and every day.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be added as a cosponsor to each of these resolutions that have just been offered: S. Res. 388, S. Res. 389, S. Res. 390, S. Res. 391, and S. Res. 392.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Nevada will be added as a cosponsor to the resolutions.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, those are all of the resolutions we have at this time.

I know the distinguished Senator from Alaska, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, will probably have some remarks about the bill we have been working on for so long now. We have a few other items.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR STEVENS AND SENATOR BYRD

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, let me take this occasion to thank the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee and, in his absence, Senator BYRD for his cooperation with Senator STEVENS. They work together as a team every day. They do an incredible job. They have one of the toughest jobs in the Congress.

I have been working in budget processes now directly for I guess about 20 years. When I was in the House as the whip, I sometimes reluctantly became a participant in those budget renegotiations. They were never easy. But I don't think I have ever seen more fire, lightning, and thunder than we had on this bill, when you compare it to bills of the past that were relatively small in size and various parts.

It was very tough. Everything was fought over so aggressively. Things didn't get in, such as Amtrak, and things got in, such as Medicare adjustments. But we found a way to make it happen. We found it very hard to let go. But the Senator from Alaska hung in there. I know he was working at 2 o'clock this morning, and I know he was back at the office today at 6:30. I talked to him sometime between 6:30 and 8 o'clock this morning. The amazing thing was he was sweet and charming and pleasant.

Is this the deed? Is this what we have here?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I dare not ask a World War II pilot veteran to lift this or the rules on ergonomics might be contradicted.

But I congratulate you, sir.

Mr. LOTT. It probably violates the rules of ergonomics, I would like to say, if that is the package.

Finally, all of us learned in the last 2 days more than we ever wanted to know about the Steller sea lion. What is it, and what are they? Whatever they are, I am sure they are beautiful, and I know they appreciate the effort of the Senator from Alaska. I know about 10,000 Alaskans appreciate the fact that their jobs will not be wiped out almost instantly.

The administration was very tough, but they were protecting the Endangered Species Act. I don't know quite how Senator STEVENS found common ground. But he did. Thank goodness for all of the persistence. He is affectionately known as "The Tasmanian Devil." But today he did this job without his Tasmanian necktie.

While we get very testy with each other sometimes, we still really appreciate the work that is done.

Senator STEVENS, congratulations, and I look forward to someday being able to know all that is in the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ABRAHAM). The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this will be the last time, because I know others want to speak.

I, too, want to congratulate the chairman and ranking member. This has been a really difficult experience. He knows it. No one knows it better than he because he had to experience it as late as 3:30 last night and as early as 6:30 this morning. We know because of a very intense debate we had within our caucus. It would not have happened without his leadership. It would not have happened without his persistence and the work of his staff—and the staff whom both the majority leader and I have been fortunate to have serve with us as we have attempted to put this package together.

I congratulate him. I thank him. I also congratulate the people of Alaska for the kind of representation they sent to Washington in the person of TED STEVENS.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I know others are going to take the floor.

While the two leaders are here, I thank each of them for their comments. Nothing is done in the Senate without the concurrence of the leadership. I know full well the help they have given us in the past days and weeks which led to the final solution. I will be speaking about that later.

I thank the Senator from Mississippi and also my friend, the Senator from

South Dakota, for their help and for the sincere comments they made today. They are very welcome, as far as I am concerned, and I am humbled by them. I thank them very much.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I appreciate the positive remarks that have just been made about our leadership and those who have supported them throughout these difficult 2 years, and look forward at an appropriate time to hearing the comments of the chairman of the Appropriations Committee on this legislation.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR,
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR
THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEP-
TEMBER 30, 2001—CONFERENCE
REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4577, which the clerk will report.

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4577) "making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes", having met, have agreed: that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same; that the House agree to the title of the bill, with an amendment, and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of today, December 15, 2000.)

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the fiscal year 2001 Labor/HHS Appropriations Conference Report is now before the Senate.

This conference report serves to wrap up work on all fiscal year 2001 appropriations bills, as it includes the Treasury-General Government and legislative branch bills. Those two bills were previously passed by the Congress, but were vetoed by the President.

The only significant change to the bills previously passed by Congress is the deletion of the telephone tax provision in the Treasury bill. The conference report includes other appropriations matters, which emerged subsequent to the completion of the other fiscal year 2001 bills.

Significant items include \$150 million for repair of the U.S.S. *Cole*, \$100 million for intelligence activities requested by the White House, \$110 million for the new markets initiative, \$100 million for volunteer firefighter grants sought by our colleague from

Delaware, Senator ROTH, and \$100 million for the Library of Congress to enhance the National Digital Library.

I want to also thank all my colleagues for their patience as I worked with the White House for a compromise on the Alaskan Fishery/Sea Lion protection issue. Through the hard work of many here in Congress and at the White House, OMB and the Department of Commerce, we achieved a compromise that meets the priorities of all parties—who share the goal of protecting the sea lion population, and the economic well being and viability of the commercial fishing industry in my State.

There are many specific issues that I could comment on today, but I had the opportunity to brief members of this side of the aisle at a conference this afternoon, and the bill is available in the Cloakroom for review.

I urge all my colleagues to support this conference report, which completes the work of this Congress, during this Congress. Next month, when the 107th Congress convenes, and a new President is inaugurated, they will both start with no carryover from this Congress.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, as has been the case on far too many occasions in the past number of years, the Senate finds itself today in the position of having to deal with a massive omnibus appropriations bill. We have had to pass a record number—21—of Continuing Resolutions in order to keep the Federal Government operating since the fiscal year began on October 1st. These Continuing Resolutions were necessary because we in the Congress and the Administration could not resolve our differences on a myriad of issues, most of which have not involved funding levels at all. Rather, the haggling for the past many weeks has been over issues such as ergonomics regulations, immigration, and certain regulatory matters; all of which would be more appropriately handled by the authorizing committees with jurisdiction over them. Instead of following the established practices and the regular order of enacting the thirteen annual appropriations bills, we have in recent years, chosen to delay appropriations bills until it is too late to do anything other than to package them in a manner that causes such packages to be used as vehicles for all manner of non-appropriations issues. This has necessitated the adoption of late-year omnibus appropriations packages well after the start of the fiscal year, such as the one before the Senate today. This is a practice that should never have been started and which, if not discontinued, I fear will gravely diminish the Senate as an institution. Senators are being denied the right to debate and amend appropriations bills, all of which contain billions of taxpayer dollars, and literally thousands of funding issues af-

fecting their constituents. Instead, we are being presented with unamendable omnibus appropriations packages, which contain many, many matters that have not had any Senate consideration at all. In the next Congress, the 107th Congress, we should strive mightily, on a bipartisan basis, to return to regular order in taking up each of the thirteen annual appropriations bills. The Appropriations Committee has marked up each of the thirteen appropriations bills in a timely manner every year under our distinguished Chairman, Senator STEVENS. He is indeed masterful in his handling of appropriations matters and he is very knowledgeable on the issues that come before the Appropriations Committee. He is also one who leads the Committee in a bipartisan manner at all times. He gives the same consideration to requests of Members of the Committee on both sides of the aisle, and I am honored to serve as Ranking Member of the Committee under his chairmanship. It has not been the fault of TED STEVENS that the appropriations bills have, too often, been lumped together into omnibus packages, such as the one before the Senate.

In an effort to facilitate a return to the regular order in the Senate's handling of the thirteen annual appropriations bills, I was pleased to have the support of both Leaders, Mr. DASCHLE and Mr. LOTT, in my amendment to the Commerce/Justice/State Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2001 to restore Senate Rule XXVIII, Paragraph 2. That provision makes it out of order for extraneous matters to be included in conference reports. Several years ago, in connection with the Senate's consideration of an FAA conference report, the Senate voted to overturn the Chair when it ruled that there was extraneous matter in that conference report. The effect of that vote to overturn the Chair was to negate Rule XXVIII, Paragraph 2. Consequently, it has not been out of order for any matter to be inserted in any conference report since that time. Upon enactment of the Commerce/Justice/State Appropriations bill, and as a result of my amendment thereto,

Rule XXVIII, Paragraph 2 will be restored. This will mean that in the 107th Congress, it will not be in order for extraneous matters to be placed in a conference report. Upon a point of order's being made in that regard, if sustained, such a conference report will be rejected. I believe that restoration of this rule will go a long way toward eliminating these annual omnibus appropriations measures that the Senate has had to deal with in the past several years and is again being asked to adopt here today.

Having said that, Mr. President, I shall vote for the pending conference report. It contains the Fiscal Year 2001 appropriations bills for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human