SENATE—*Monday, May 22, 2000*

The Senate met at 11 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, we praise You for new beginnings and fresh starts. Things never need remain the same. Because of Your grace, we need not perpetuate the problems of the past. Last week was a week of conflict, sharp disagreements, and acrimonious differences over the procedures and methods of managing the work of the Senate. Here we are, at the beginning of a new week. We know that we cannot remain deadlocked and debilitated by differences. Grant the Senators the willingness to listen to one another. May both parties be willing to place the highest priority and value on finding a way to move forward together. Remind them that there is nowhere else to go, no escape from the responsibility of leading the Nation together. Help all of the Senators to discern what is needed for the parties to function effectively together and then to commit themselves to doing everything they can do, not to defend a position but to discover Your plan for unity and oneness in the spirit of patriotism. Father, we need You. Our efforts have not worked. We need Your intervention, Your vision for a solution, and Your power to make things work. Extricate us from being part of the problem to becoming part of Your solution. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON KYL, a Senator from the State of Arizona, 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 able Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. KYL. I thank the Chair.

SCHEDULE

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business with Senators DURBIN and THOMAS in control of the first 2 hours. For the information of all Senators, it is the intention of the majority leader to begin consideration of the agricultural appropriations bill during Tuesday's session. The leader has announced that the Senate will remain in session notwithstanding the Memorial Day recess in order to complete this important spending bill. Therefore, Senators can expect votes throughout the week and into the weekend if necessary.

Mr. President, I observe the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be a period for the transaction for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be under control of the Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, or his designee.

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask consent to use as much of the time allocated to Senator DURBIN as I may use.

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

SUGAR PROGRAM

Mr. DORGAN. I noticed in the Washington Post this morning an editorial I wanted to comment on briefly. Those noted experts on agriculture and the farm program who write editorials for the Washington Post have written an editorial today entitled ''A Deal Too Sweet'' about the sugar program. I can just see them sitting out there in their Big Ben coveralls dumping sugar into their coffee, cogitating about America's sugar program and America's farm program. I want to suggest to them to look in a different direction.

They see a program in this country where sugar prices are kept far too high, in their judgment. They believe the market for sugar would produce prices at just a fraction of what the sugar program currently provides sugar producers. I fear the Washington Post just does not understand the sugar program or the market.

Most sugar in this world is traded contract to contract between countries. Very little is traded in the open market. What is traded in the open market is the surplus or the dumped sugar. This dumped sugar is traded at very low prices, but that does not reflect the cost of sugar that is traded between countries.

For a number of reasons, the sugar program is not working as well as it had in the past. For a long period of time the sugar program provided both stable prices for consumers and also stable income, or stable support for sugar producers. Is this a worthwhile goal? I think it is.

We have seen times in this country when the sugar prices spiked up, up, way up, which was a terrible disadvantage to America's consumers. We have seen circumstances as well where farm income has dipped way down. That was devastating to producers. At least with respect to this commodity, sugar, we developed a program that provides stability for both consumers and producers. This makes sense to me.

The sugar program has not worked as well in recent months and years. The reason, in my judgment, is because the current underlying farm program has not worked. As prices have collapsed for most other commodities, and as we have pulled the rug out from under producers with a farm program called Freedom to Farm, we have had more acreage put into sugar production in this country.

In addition to that, we have had molasses stuffed with sugar coming in from Canada, which is just another method of transporting sugar into this country in excess of the amount agreed to by our trade agreements. We have a significant threat from Mexico, despite what we thought was an agreement on sugar, so we have a whole series of threats to those who produce sugar—cane and beet—in this country.

The Washington Post would make the case: Let's just get rid of the sugar program. Others will probably make the same case. It would be interesting to ask the following question, and perhaps get an answer from the Washington Post and others who believe this. The question would be: While sugar prices have fallen by a fourth since 1996, has anyone seen a reduction in the price of sugar at the grocery store? Let me repeat, prices to the producer have fallen by one-fourth; has anyone seen a reduction in the price of

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.