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The Senate met at 10 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:

Blessed God, here we are at the beginning of another day. Help us to believe that what we commit to You this day will come to pass if You deem it best for us. We need to experience the peace of mind and body that comes when we do what You guide us to do and then leave the results to You.

Bless the Senators with the profound peace that comes from giving You their burdens and receiving Your resiliency and refreshment. May this be a great day because they, and all of us who work with them, decide to rest in Your presence and wait patiently for Your power to strengthen us. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LINCOLN D. CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, 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 Rhode Island is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. L. CHAFEE. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m. and will begin consideration of S. 2603, the legislative branch appropriations bill. It is hoped that an agreement regarding debate time and amendments can be made so that a vote on final passage can be scheduled for this afternoon. Under a previous consent agreement, there are 40 minutes remaining on FEC

nominees Brad Smith and Danny McDonald. Votes on those nominations, as well as the judicial nominations debated yesterday, are expected to be stacked this afternoon. Senators will be notified as those votes are scheduled.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. L. CHAFEE). 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 for not to extend beyond the hour of 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Illinois, or his designee.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes in morning business.

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

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

CROP INSURANCE

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I come to the floor of the Senate today because—and I speak with some sense of timing—I come from an agricultural State.

In the next several days we could very well have a crop insurance reform conference report out here on the floor. There is at least some discussion, some thought, and maybe some probability that included in that conference report will be about \$7 billion of economic assistance for family farmers, which essentially will be more AMTA payments.

When the Budget Committee allowed for up to \$7 billion to go to assistance

for family farmers in the country, whether it be Minnesota, whether it be Montana, or any other State, I think all of us believed and hoped that this would be far superior to emergency appropriations, and that we would have the agriculture authorization committee do some fairly important investigation and analysis of the best way to get this financial assistance out to family farmers.

In my rush to come down to the floor, I did not bring with me the exact statistics, but basically the reports that we now see on what are called AMTA payments suggest that entirely too much of this money goes to those in least need. In other words, it is a subsidy program. Last year, it was to the tune of about \$16 billion in inverse relationship to need. The top 10 percent of the producers—some of the big corporations—received over 60 percent of the benefits, and then the farmers received the rest, so that a family farm in Minnesota would be lucky to get maybe \$2,000 worth of assistance; whereas, those huge operations were raking in \$100,000 worth of assistance.

If we just take the \$7 billion and put it into this conference report without any committee hearings and without taking at least several weeks after we get back to do some evaluation and some important analysis about how to get this assistance out to the people who need it the most, then I think we have not lived up to our responsibility as Senators.

I say to my colleagues that I think we could at the very minimum, for example, make sure that this money goes to producers. Those who own the land but aren't involved in the production receive too much of the benefits. The benefits ought to go to the producers.

I would also say to my colleagues that there is no reason in the world that for fiscal year 2001 we can't focus on equity and get the loan rate up at least to the rate for soybeans, in which case corn would be \$2.11 and wheat would be \$3.10. Let me tell you that is the direction we need to go for a State such as mine.

I sent a letter yesterday to Chairman LUGAR, my colleague, a Senator for

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