

SENATE—Monday, January 29, 2001

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the State of Virginia.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Dear God, You constantly are seeking us. Our desire to pray arises in our hearts because You want to love, guide, inspire, and empower us. The greatest gift we can receive in this time of prayer is more of You. Whatever else You give or withhold is to draw us closer to You.

In our world of politics, so often the question is, "Who gets the glory?" We confess that often we become obsessed by concern over whether we have been recognized for our abilities or rewarded for our accomplishments. Your admonition to us through Jeremiah helps us order our priorities. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches, but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight."—Jeremiah 9:23-24.

We dedicate this new week to delight in what delights You. You are the only One we want to please. You are our heart's delight! Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable GEORGE ALLEN 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 29, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE ALLEN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ALLEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the majority leader, the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. LOTT.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, are there any other proceedings or announcements that need to be made at this time?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Not at this time.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 2 p.m., with the two leaders or their designees in control of that time. Following morning business, the Senate will begin consideration of Gale Norton's nomination to be Secretary of the Interior. Under the previous order that was entered into last week, there will be up to 4 hours of debate on the Norton nomination during today's session. Tomorrow the Senate will complete debate on the Norton nomination as well as consider the nominations of Governor Whitman to be the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator and Elaine Chao to be Secretary of Labor. Those confirmation votes are scheduled to occur at 2:45 p.m. tomorrow. Following those votes, the Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of John Ashcroft to be Attorney General. A vote on that nomination is expected prior to the Senate adjourning this week.

I should say that while the vote in the Judiciary Committee on Senator Ashcroft was delayed until this week, I believe there will be a vote on it either Tuesday or Wednesday morning. I hope we can begin the debate on his nomination as early as tomorrow afternoon and continue, if necessary, into the night and Wednesday and into the night and into Thursday—all if necessary.

I had a brief conversation with Senator DASCHLE this morning about the schedule for the next month or so, but we did not get into a deep discussion about exactly how to proceed after the votes that are now scheduled at 2:45 tomorrow afternoon. We expect to meet later on today, and as we get an agreement of how we can proceed, certainly we will notify our Members to that effect.

I do want to say also, I firmly believe that Senators should have every opportunity to question the nominees to the President's Cabinet, and to make statements on the floor if they choose so

there can be a full reading of the record and a discussion of their record. But I also think it is important that we do come to a conclusion and reach a vote.

There has been good cooperation on both sides of the aisle, and from committees, over the past month when they were chaired by Democrats and last week as it continued under Republican leadership. We will have completed all the nominations but one by tomorrow afternoon. I hope we can move to that nomination expeditiously also.

Again, I am sure we will have a full debate, but I think after a reasonable period of time we should come to a vote so the Justice Department can have an Attorney General in place and can begin to do the very important job that he will have to carry forward.

I thank my colleagues for their attention and look forward to the debate this week and working with the leadership on the schedule.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, if the distinguished Senator will yield for a comment?

Mr. LOTT. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. LEAHY. On the nomination of Senator Ashcroft to be Attorney General, I understand the White House actually sent the nomination up this morning. But even though they had not sent it until today, to try to accommodate the new President, we held hearings prior to the inauguration of the new President. I think we had an equal number of witnesses on both sides. There may have been one more for Senator Ashcroft than against, but anyway, it was completed during that time. Answers that were submitted came in this weekend.

I know the distinguished chairman of the committee, Senator HATCH, is out of the country, but I am perfectly willing, certainly on this side, to go forward with the committee vote on him as soon as he comes in, especially now that the papers have come up from the White House today. I notified the President's office this morning—speaking about Senator Ashcroft—I will not take part in any filibuster, nor do I expect there to be any filibuster on this nomination. I assure the distinguished majority leader we moved as rapidly as we could. We now actually have the nomination and the schedule is now in the hands of my friend from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Senator from Vermont for that information. I think it is appropriate we actually receive the nomination before we vote—a little small detail but that has been taken care of.