

SENATE—Thursday, August 2, 2001

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Presiding Officer, the Honorable JACK REED, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

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

Gracious God, You have promised that, "In quietness and confidence shall be our strength."—Isaiah 30:15. Thank You for prayer in which we can commune with You, renew our convictions, receive fresh courage, and affirm our commitment to serve You. In Your presence we simply can be and know that we are loved. You love us and give us new beginnings each day. Thank You that we can depend on Your guidance for all that is ahead of us this day. Suddenly we realize that this quiet moment has refreshed us. We are replenished with new hope.

Now we can return to our outer world of challenges and opportunities with greater determination. We want to serve You by giving our very best to the leadership of our Nation to which You have called us. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BILL NELSON, a Senator from the State of Florida, 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. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, August 2, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JACK REED, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today, the Senate will resume consideration of the VA-HUD Appropriations Act under the able leadership of the two managers, Senators MIKULSKI and BOND. The first matter of business today will be an amendment of Senator NELSON of Florida. There will be rollcall votes on amendments to this bill throughout the day. When I say "throughout the day," we have every expectation this bill will end sooner rather than later. We need very badly to get back on the Agriculture emergency bill. We hope to do that very soon.

Cloture was filed on the Agriculture supplemental, so all first-degree amendments must be filed prior to 1 p.m. today. I have conferred with the Democratic manager, Senator MIKULSKI, and both her staff and the staff of Senator BOND have looked at their amendments and are in a position to make a determination as to these amendments. We hope, as I have indicated, there will be just a few amendments offered today. We know Senator KYL of Arizona has an amendment, perhaps two amendments he will offer, but hopefully we can wrap up this bill quite soon.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 2602

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (H.R. 2602) to extend the Export Administration Act until November 20, 2001.

Mr. REID. I object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the rule, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration

of H.R. 2620, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Mikulski/Bond amendment No. 1214, in the nature of a substitute.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Florida, Mr. NELSON, is recognized to offer an amendment.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I am waiting for the amendment to arrive. I seek counsel of the manager of the bill.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we know the direction in which the Senator from Florida wants to go. He is deeply concerned about arsenic-treated wood. What he is evaluating, based on our advice, is whether he wants to offer something that is a mandate or pursue a more prudent direction in terms of a study. I believe his staff is coming over with the amendment.

The Senator has a lot of concerns about this. I recommend he state now what those concerns are, and when staff gets here we can step back and he can offer his amendment. I encourage the more prudent course; however, the Senator is within his rights. Either way, we look forward to hearing the Senator's arguments.

Also, I note the cooperation of my colleague, Senator BOND, that we could start at 9:30 and be ready to move forward. He is missing a very important Republican caucus and I thank him for his cooperation. I know President Bush and the Vice President are here. In his commitment, particularly to moving this bill and the funding for veterans and other compelling needs, he was willing to be gracious enough to work with the Democratic leadership and meet earlier in the day. I publicly thank him.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, my sincere thanks to my colleague from Maryland. Obviously, this is the most important thing we have to do. I share Senator MIKULSKI's view we should begin discussion of this serious concern of the Senator from Florida. We look forward to working with the Senator. I thank the Chair and the manager on the Democratic side, who has a very good idea. Normally, when she has a good idea, it is much more successful than some of the other approaches that might be taken. I offer that as a humble suggestion.