

Employees younger than 65 will also be on their own for medical costs. A fund set up by LTV when it last emerged from bankruptcy to pay for employees' health care probably will be out of money in less than a year, said Mr. Tomasch, the LTV spokesman. Among the benefits that will be lost is a medical plan that covers 80 to 90 percent of the costs of prescriptions ordered by mail. Last year, the company paid \$200 million in health care costs, he said.

If LTV's unions are unable to secure the loan, their best hope is to find a buyer for the mills.

"Plan A is to keep LTV operating and to do our work in Washington, D.C.," said Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a Democratic representative from the Cleveland area, where LTV has its biggest mill. "Plan B is to prepare our community to invite a new buyer for LTV, including providing incentives."

Finding a buyer for the Cleveland mill will not be easy. "There is excess capacity around the world, and the Cleveland mill is one of the highest-cost mills," said Mr. Bradford, the independent analyst.

Even if a buyer is found, that might not help LTV's current employees. The mills will be more attractive to a buyer without the workers, Mr. Bradford said, because then they would not be forced to assume the health care costs.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will read a paragraph:

LTV's workers are laboring fiercely to pull off an 11th-hour rescue, but their prospects are dim. Their union is hoping for a \$250 million loan backed by the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board, an arm of the Commerce Department. "We're going to fight like hell to get this loan, and fight like hell to save this company," said Leo Gerard, international president of the steelworkers union.

Mr. President, I along with other Senators who try to represent workers and working families and steelworkers, have written a letter to this Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board in the Commerce Department asking them to grant this loan. On the Senate floor today, I wish to associate myself with President Gerard's comments. If there is any vehicle—we are down to the wire here—if there is an economic stimulus package or economic recovery package, I will have an amendment which will give that loan board better authorizing language to make it clear that, indeed, this is their mandate to guarantee just these kinds of loans. I don't know whether or not we are going to have that package. That is being negotiated.

I have also made it clear that I think if there is any other bill that passes through in terms of providing relief for this sector of the economy or that sector, that from my point of view there also has to be an amendment which represents relief for those people who are flat on their back, out of work, without unemployment insurance any longer, without health care coverage or soon to be without coverage, or to help these steelworkers.

I wanted to cite this article because I am sure President Gerard and the steelworkers sometimes think they are

shouting in the wind, that they are not being heard. Industrial work is being spit out of the economy. LTV shut down. At the taconite plant in the Iron Range of Minnesota, 1,400 workers are out of work.

I went with them the day the local president called everybody together to tell them it was over. And I got really mixed advice about whether to go because people said, if you are there, like a politician, people are just going to turn on you because they are so angry about losing their jobs. They didn't do that. People appreciate the fact you go up and you are with people, especially in these times.

But the fact is, not just for the sake of these workers who want nothing more but to work, but for financial security as well, we ought to pay attention to what has happened in the steel industry. We should pay attention to what is happening to certain vital sectors of the economy.

Again, just so President Gerard and the International Steelworkers Union don't think there aren't Senators who support them, I know others do as well. Senator ROCKEFELLER has been at this a long time. This was Senator BYRD's original idea. This Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board of the Commerce Department can do this. This is their mission and mandate. They can say: We guarantee this loan. So far they have not done so. I wish we could rush through some additional language to make it clear this is their mission and mandate. We may not be able to do so. But they ought to go forward with this loan. If they don't, the consequences are going to be very harsh.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess until 3:30 today.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:03 p.m., recessed until 3:30 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. JOHNSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we have been hearing a steady drumbeat of complaints from our Republican colleagues about the pace of judicial confirmations by the Senate. For all who

know the facts, there is no basis for the charge that Democrats have engaged in delay tactics on judicial nominees. In fact, the Democratic Senate has been significantly more diligent in confirming judges under the Bush administration than the Republican Senate was at any point under the Clinton administration.

In the 5 months since Democrats gained control of the Senate, the Judiciary Committee has already held 11 hearings on judicial nominees. Under Chairman LEAHY's leadership, we held hearings during the August recess, and also just 2 days after the terrorist attacks. In addition, we held a hearing in the Capitol Building, when the Senate offices were closed by the anthrax contamination.

As a result, 27 judges have already been confirmed in the 5 months since Democrats took control of the Senate. By the time the Senate adjourns, we are likely to have confirmed more than 30 judges—more than were confirmed during the entire first year of President Clinton's first term in office when Democrats controlled the Senate, and more than double the number confirmed during the entire first year of the first Bush administration.

Our record is good by any measure. It becomes even better when we compare it to the record of the Republican majority when they controlled the Senate during the Clinton administration.

We have held 11 judicial nomination hearings in just 5 months, almost all of which have included several judges per hearing. In 1999 and 2000, the Republicans held an average of only seven hearings for the entire year.

In confirming 24 judges since the August recess, we have had a more productive post-August-recess period than any Republican-led Senate did for a comparable period in the last 6 years.

Some Republicans are now blaming Democrats for the current number of vacancies on the Federal bench. But these vacancies were largely caused by the tactics of the Republican majority over the last 6 years. We know that our colleagues worked to impede President Clinton's executive branch nominees such as Bill Lann Lee, nominated to head the civil rights division, and Dr. Satcher, the nominee for Surgeon General. Our colleagues also blocked or attempted to block President Clinton's judicial nominees by delaying or refusing to hold hearings, and refusing to allow the Senate to vote on some nominees. The average length of time a circuit court nominee waited for a hearing under the Republican Senate was about 300 days. Some nominees waited up to 4 years for a hearing. In 6 years, the Republican Senate failed to confirm nearly half of President Clinton's nominees to the circuit courts. As a result, vacancies in the Federal courts increased by 60 percent.