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Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

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

Gracious God, Sovereign of this Nation and Lord of our Lives, You have blessed us to be a vital part of Your blessing to others. We commit this day to be sensitive to the needs of others around us. Show us the people who particularly need encouragement or affirmation. Give us exactly what we should say to give them a lift. Free us of preoccupation with ourselves and our own needs. Help us to remember that people will care about what we know when they know we care about them. May our countenance, words, and actions communicate our caring. Make us good listeners and enable us to hear what people are expressing beneath what they are saying. Most of all, remind us of the power of intercessory prayer. May we claim Your best for people as we pray for them. Especially we pray for those with whom we disagree on issues. Help us to see them not as enemies but as people who will help sharpen our edge. Lift us above petty attitudes or petulant gossip. Fill this Chamber with Your presence and our hearts with Your magnanimous attitude toward others.

Today, we remember William Ridgley, who joined the company of heaven this last Saturday. He started his Senate service on June 1, 1949, as a bookkeeper in the Senate Disbursing Office and rose through the ranks of the Disbursing Office, leaving as the Senate Financial Clerk after 28 years. We remember him with gratefulness and ask You to comfort his family. In the name of our Lord and Savior. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Minnesota [Mr. GRAMS] is recognized.

Mr. GRAMS. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

SCHEDULE

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today the Senate will conduct a period of morning business until the hour of 2 p.m. with Senator DASCHLE or his designee controlling the time from 12 until 1, and Senator COVERDELL or his designee controlling the time from 1 until 2 this afternoon. Following morning business, the Senate will then resume consideration of H.R. 3662, the Interior appropriations bill. There will be no rollcall votes during today's session, however, and the majority leader urges any Senator who intends to offer an amendment to this appropriations bill to offer and to debate the amendment today so that we may complete action on this legislation tomorrow. Any votes ordered on amendments today will occur beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday. Under a previous consent agreement, Senator BUMPERS will be recognized at 3 o'clock today in order to offer and debate his grazing fees amendment. It is the majority leader's hope that once Senator BUMPERS offers that amendment, we will be able to reach a reasonable time limitation for debate so that we may move on to other outstanding issues on the Interior appropriations bill.

Again, the majority leader asks for the cooperation of all colleagues as we continue to dispose of the remaining appropriations bills and hopes that Members will refrain from offering nongermane amendments that will only continue to delay passage of these spending measures as we approach the end of the fiscal year. We are also attempting to reach an agreement for consideration of the FAA reauthoriza-

tion bill that would enable us to finish that legislation in a reasonable time-frame. There are also a number of other legislative matters we hope to consider prior to the Senate adjournment, including the Magnuson Act. And with the help of all Senators, we can reach time agreements to finish all these matters.

Finally, I would remind all Senators that the majority leader expects busy sessions for the remaining weeks, and Senators should plan their schedules accordingly. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to finish our Senate business on time if Members request no votes every evening because of other commitments. I thank all of my colleagues in advance for their cooperation.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to exceed 2 hours, with the time until 1 p.m. to be under the control of the Democratic leader, Mr. DASCHLE, and the time between 1 and 2 p.m. to be under the control of the Senator from Georgia, Mr. COVERDELL.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2073

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I understand that Senator NICKLES has a bill that is due for its second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2073) to require the District of Columbia to comply with the 5-year time limit for welfare recipients, to prohibit any future waiver of such limit, and for other purposes.

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



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Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I object to further proceedings on the bill at this time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. GRAMS. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I see no Senator on the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I realize this is the time that is under the control of the Democrats, but since there is no one here, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed as in morning business for 6 or 7 minutes.

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

NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, we are going to move, later today and tomorrow, to the Department of Interior appropriations bill which is very important to me and to my State of Wyoming. I wanted to talk just a couple of moments about something that is very important to me and very close to my heart. That is the National Park System.

Wyoming, of course, has two of what I think are the crown jewels of the Park System, the Teton National Park and Yellowstone National Park, as well as several others in our State. Selfishly, they are very important. But more than that, national parks are, I think, a part of our heritage. They are part of our past, they are part of our future, they are part of our economy, and something that I feel very strongly about. Of course, they are funded in the appropriations bill for the Department of Interior.

I spent a considerable amount of time in August in the parks, both Yellowstone and Teton. Part of the problem we talked about while I was there is a financial one. It is big business. Yellowstone National Park has an operating budget of somewhere over \$20 million, and with other income, more than a \$40 million budget. It is a large activity.

We will be talking in this appropriations bill about priorities. Mr. President, over time, the idea of priorities, the idea of funding, will become even more difficult. We will have to set those priorities. We will have to set priorities among land management agencies, Yellowstone Park and the Park System, the forest and the wilderness, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM. All of these competed, frankly, for funding. So we have to talk about priorities.

Certainly my highest priority in that process is the National Park System. Part of it is my own personal history. I grew up just outside of Yellowstone Park between Cody and Yellowstone. So it has been part of my life.

The question, of course, is how we manage these parks. Frankly, we have some problems.

We have some problems short term and we have some problems, in my judgment, long term. A part of the short-term problem, of course, we will be facing today and tomorrow. But part of the longer term issues, I think, will be discussed over a period of time, and properly so, because there needs to be some fairly significant changes. Specifically, there is funding for Park Service operations, and in the Senate bill is \$1.1 billion. The House is somewhat less than that. This will be about a \$75 million increase over last year for the operations of the park. I support that. I hope that we maintain, when the bill is finally passed, the additional funds that the Senate has put in. This is a good first step to deal with some of the problems that we have. But it is a short term solution.

What are some of the other solutions? One of them is what was done last year in this appropriations bill, and done again this year, in terms of extending a pilot fee program. One of the ways that, obviously, we can deal with funding for parks is to do something about the fees. Yellowstone Park, I believe, is \$10 per car per week. Compared to other recreational activities in this country, that is a very low price, one that has not been changed for a very long time, and one that we ought to take a look at.

We have an opportunity to do that now in the pilot fee program that was passed by the Congress, which allows the parks to take a look at their fees, to temporarily extend and increase these fees, if they want to, on a pilot basis, and to keep in the park some 80 percent of the increase. This has been one of the problems for parks like Yellowstone. Much of the revenue that comes in there doesn't stay there. It goes into the pot and is redistributed among all of the parks. So this gives an opportunity, on a pilot basis, to raise the fees, if that seems appropriate, and then to maintain these fees where they are collected—80 percent of them—in that particular park.

I think it is an excellent opportunity to do this as a pilot program. The problem is, they have had an opportunity—the Park Service—to do this now since early last winter and haven't done it yet. They haven't moved on this program yet. I am disappointed in that. It is not a function of the local parks. First of all, originally, 50 of them were designated to participate in this pilot program. Now the Senate has increased it to a hundred. None has been designated by the Park Service. On the other hand, the Forest Service and, I think, BLM both have already moved on this program and are making some

progress with it. When we go to Yellowstone and talk about their needs, the park superintendent there is for it. I called the Director of the Park Service. He is for it, too, but it hasn't happened; it hasn't happened because the Secretary of the Interior hasn't authorized it. That is too bad because that is part of a demonstration, a short-term solution to this issue.

Now, I don't think that it's the long-term solution. There needs to be some other things done, some fairly major things. We have talked about them for some time. One of the problems, as you can imagine, is the continuing authorization of more and more Federal parks. Without a definition of what a Federal park really is, I have to suggest that I think a number of the parks that have been authorized in recent times have been parks that, under most circumstances, could just as well be State parks or local parks or community parks, but Members of this body and others want them to be national parks so they are paid for by the Federal Government. So now we have a \$4 billion backlog in the service of taking care of facilities that need to be brought up current, but we continue to authorize more and more parks, without being able to fund the parks we have.

So that is one of the things that needs to be done, it seems to me—at least to develop a criterion as to what really qualifies as a national park, what characteristics ought to be involved to qualify as a national park.

Another is concession reform. For a long time, we have been seeking to do something about concessions. Now, the concessions are not there to fund the parks, necessarily; they are there to provide services for visitors. But it is true, I think, that we need to revise that. First of all, the concession contracts cannot be removed because we haven't passed a bill that does it. They are operating on a short-term basis. Second, there are instances in which the park should be receiving more money than they are from the concessions. Third, those concession funds probably ought to stay in those parks. That is another thing that we need to talk about and need to change.

Many of these changes are acceptable to the people who manage the park, but the Department hasn't moved, and indeed the Congress hasn't moved. There also, of course, needs to be some management changes, as well. GAO has done a study. One of the notable things was that the money that has gone to parks has not gone to the resources that the parks themselves say are the highest priority. That is one of the management problems that needs to be changed. When you set priorities in planning, then it seems to me the funding ought to coincide with those priorities. So there needs to be a lot of things done.

I am here to support national parks. I think they are a very, very important thing. I think they have a great future.