

the debate, which is on a seriously contested amendment.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. STEVENS. Thank you, Mr. President.

LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS ACT AND OTHER APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I want to take just a few minutes of the Senate's time to comment upon the passage of Senate bill 1061, the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act.

During the 104th Congress, the bill from this subcommittee was the center of political controversy between the Congress and the White House, and within the Senate itself. We did not succeed in passing a bill as a separate measure for these functions in the 104th Congress.

Thursday's vote of 91 to 8 sent a clear signal of the Senate's support for the leadership shown by Senators SPECTER and HARKIN. They crafted a bill that emerged from our Appropriations Committee unanimously.

The statement of administration policy raised a few differences, but it indicated strong bipartisan support for this bill. The most contentious votes we have faced this year on appropriations bills were on the Labor, Health and Human Services bill.

Despite the strong feelings generated by those issues, the debate was fair. The entire Senate came together to pass the bill, and sent the unambiguous message that I referred to—we want to see this bill enacted this year.

Supporting the work of the subcommittee has been an extremely experienced and effective staff. Craig Higgins serves as clerk of the subcommittee. He is joined by Marsha Simon, who assists Senator HARKIN as the minority clerk. Bettilou Taylor, Dale Cabaniss, Lula Edwards, and Carole Geagley round out the subcommittee staff.

I commend not only the chairman and ranking member but all of the staff for the hard work and the effort they put into preparing the bill in a fashion that received such strong, strong support in the committee, and from the Senate.

We eagerly now await the passage of that bill by the House, so we can have the conference commence and get the bill to the President prior to September 30, I hope.

I also report to the Senate that the Agriculture and legislative conferences

are proceeding. We should have those bills from conference today.

We have just passed a military construction bill.

We have in conference the Department of Defense conference which had its first meeting yesterday.

The VA-HUD bill, the Energy bill, the foreign ops bill, and Transportation—we expect, Mr. President, all of those will be out of conference early next week.

That will leave us five bills to still finish.

The District of Columbia bill has not passed the Senate yet, nor the House.

We have before us now, under the guidance of the Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON], the Interior bill. We expect it to be finished here this week and go to conference and, hopefully, come back to the Senate next week.

As I have said, the Labor, Health and Human Services bill, the House needs to pass that. We hope it will get to it soon. That will leave us the Commerce, State, Justice bill, and the Treasury bill—all of which, Mr. President, it is still our goal to try and get them to the President by the 30th of September.

Mr. President, it will mean perhaps, though, we will have to have still a continuing resolution to give the President the time that he needs to review all of these bills. I am hopeful that the House will send us a continuing resolution—a clean continuing resolution—sometime early next week.

I commend the Senator from Washington on this bill. I am hopeful the Senate will work with us to make sure that this bill is finished here today, if it is at all possible.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks time?

Mr. STEVENS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the unanimous-consent agreement, there will be 90 minutes, equally divided, on the pending business before the Senate. In addition, there are no second-degree amendments to be in order.

The Senator is recognized.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, may I inquire, does it require a unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment for purposes of consideration of this proposed amendment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be laid aside.

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

Mr. BRYAN. I thank the Chair.

AMENDMENT NO. 1205

(Purpose: To reduce funding for Forest Service road construction and eliminate the purchaser credit program)

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I offer an amendment and submit it for immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. BRYAN], for himself, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. TORRICELLI, proposes an amendment numbered 1205.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

On page 65, line 18, strike "\$160,269,000" and insert "\$150,269,000".

On page 65, line 23, after "205" insert "", none of which amount shall be available for purchaser credits in connection with timber sales advertised after September 30, 1997, unless the credits were earned in connection with sales advertised on or before that date (and no purchaser credits shall be earned for the construction or reconstruction of roads on the National Forest transportation system in connection with timber sales advertised after that date (but the foregoing disallowance of purchaser credits shall not affect the availability of the purchaser election under section 14(i) of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(i)))".

On page 127, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

SEC. . TREATMENT OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION COSTS ESTIMATED FOR TIMBER SALES AS MONEY RECEIVED FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYMENTS TO THE STATES FOR SCHOOLS AND ROADS.

During fiscal year 1998, the term "money received", for the purposes of the Act entitled "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and nine", approved May 23, 1908 (35 Stat. 260, chapter 192; 16 U.S.C. 500), and section 13 of the act of March 1, 1911 (36 Stat. 963, chapter 186; 16 U.S.C. 500), shall include—

- (1) the amount of purchaser credits earned in connection with timber sales advertised on or before September 30, 1997; and
- (2) the amount of specified road construction costs estimated in the agency appraisal process in connection with timber sales advertised after that date.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I am always pleased, when I have the opportunity, as I do this afternoon, to support, and in this instance actually propose, legislation that benefits both the American taxpayer and the environment.

The amendment I am offering today eliminates a subsidy used primarily by large timber companies that not only has negative consequences for the taxpayers but also a detrimental effect on the environment.

Each year, American taxpayers spend millions of dollars to subsidize the construction of roads needed for logging on national forest lands.