

proven to be successful. Until I passed legislation that ended an outrageous conflict of interest by which those who approved the spending of salmon recovery funds awarded most of the money to themselves, the money was misspent. Now, at least the money goes to those whom objective scientists feel will use it most effectively.

Solutions Dictated to the region from Washington, D.C.: Recently, the Administration's top environmental staffer in Washington, D.C., Katie McGinty, was in Oregon to discuss the government's salmon recovery plans for the Northwest. That is exactly the wrong way to approach this problem. Why would our region put decisions about our economy, our communities, our future in the hands of someone 3,000 miles away? I believe we need to make these decisions, not Administration officials in Washington, D.C.

Rather than continuing the mindless attacks on my efforts to bring some balance to this debate, I make the following offer to those who criticize the Eastern Washington part of my Elwha package. If you are not for dam removal and want to keep the dams intact, offer up better legislative language that helps accomplish the goal of protecting our region's economic future. My legislation may need improvement. I am anxious to listen to how others would reach my goal. If there is a better idea of how we can ease the concerns of Eastern Washington with regard to dam removal, I challenge the Administration, Senator MURRAY, and the Sierra Club, and other opponents of this legislation, to offer a better alternative. I am interested in all proposals from those who want to make a statement in favor of protecting the dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

If you favor removing dams, however, and that is what is really driving your opposition to my legislation, I think it is time for you to be honest with the Northwest and state your position clearly. The Clinton Administration, and major environmental groups have sent mixed signals on this issue. Many of them advocate extreme, unrealistic and unscientific salmon recovery measures; some do not. I think it is time for these people to make their positions clear—do they want the dams removed or effectively destroyed, or what? And if they continue to temporize on this issue, I ask them to address the goals that I discussed earlier—salmon, irrigation, river traffic, hydropower production, recreation, and flood control—and tell me how they are committed to those traditional objectives, or if the possibility of attaining some salmon recovery goals is worth destroying most or all of these other uses.

I want my Elwha Dam removal legislation fully discussed in committee and have requested hearings. In the past few weeks, the opponents of my anti-dam removal legislation have called me divisive, extremist, and a salmon-hater. I am none of those things. I hope that my opponents, and particularly

the Administration and my Democratic colleagues from the Northwest, will work together with me to craft legislation that removes the lower Elwha River dam and protects Eastern Washington from those who want to remove dams, stop irrigation, eliminate barge traffic, reduce hydropower, raise electric rates for families, restrict recreation and push for dubious salmon solutions.

I welcome the opportunity for a full and reasoned debate on this subject. It's time to put the rhetoric aside, the tired adjectives aside, and the political smokescreens aside. It's time for everyone to come clean, and make clear where they stand on this important issue. This bill provides such an opportunity, and I look forward to receiving proposals from people throughout the region on how to improve my bill.

Ms. SNOWE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The distinguished Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. SNOWE. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS REFORM AND RESTRUCTURING ACT—CON- FERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the conference report.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back on the pending conference report.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my statement, the order of speakers be Senator COLLINS from Maine and Senator CHAFEE from Rhode Island.

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

Ms. SNOWE. I further ask unanimous consent that Senator DEWINE be recognized for up to 60 minutes following our statements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

EFFORTS OF SENATOR GEORGE MITCHELL IN ACHIEVING THE NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE AGREEMENT

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join with my colleagues, Senator COLLINS from Maine and Senator CHAFEE from Rhode Island, in the wake of yesterday's 97 to 0

vote by the Senate to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution 90 acknowledging the historic Northern Ireland peace agreement reached just 2 weeks ago.

The agreement was produced through the hard work and patience and goodwill of representatives of Northern Ireland's political parties, the Prime Ministers of both Britain and Ireland, President Clinton, and a man well known in this Chamber, the former Senator from Maine and former majority leader, George Mitchell.

Senator Mitchell's skill, patience, and determination were largely responsible for bringing opposing parties to the point where they were able to broker a historic agreement that offers the people of Northern Ireland the opportunity to put an end to the long-standing fear and suffering they have endured and to achieve a future that will be as bright as the spirit and potential of her extraordinary people.

In describing Senator Mitchell's pivotal role, one of the participants in the talks said, "Here the United States sent one of its most able, skilled, talented, humble politicians, a supreme diplomat, and frankly we didn't deserve him."

Well of course, the people of Northern Ireland deserved his leadership that has provided, as we now know, the very best opportunity for these talks to succeed.

After his retirement from the Senate, President Clinton invited Senator Mitchell to serve as a special economic adviser to Northern Ireland. However, before he finished his efforts to attract business investment to Northern Ireland, Senator Mitchell was selected by both the British and Irish governments to join a panel that recommended the decommissioning of arms by the paramilitary factions in Northern Ireland. He assumed responsibility for taking over the peace talks in June of 1996.

Senator Mitchell faced tremendous obstacles in attempting to win the trust of the parties involved in seeking an agreement. After all, previous efforts resulted in failure. However, his patience, diligence and sincerity won them over. I know that Senator Mitchell's long experience in the Senate helped prepare him for this unique challenge. As one who served with him for more than 14 years in the Maine Congressional Delegation, I know he has an excellent ability to understand the concerns of whomever he is talking with—whether it is a constituent from Bangor, or Augusta or Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland.

Being an effective majority leader in the Senate, as we know, requires one to be a good listener, to know when to compromise, to know when to coax and cajole, to know when to be patient and to know when to be firm. All these qualities served George Mitchell well in this body and served him well in his most recent role which consumed 22 long, hard months of negotiations.