

One last year had \$15 million invested in new wells; this year, zero. One drilled 31 new wells last year; this year, 1. We have hundreds of thousands of small wells, called stripper wells, producing 15 barrels a day or less. Many of those, if they shut them in, the oil is gone. The entire reserve is lost.

We are not sure how to fix that. It is a very complicated problem. But the amendment that is being offered, which I join in, is saying, with prices this low and the fact that we used a lot of our expensive oil during the Iraqi war, we ought to replenish with \$420 million worth of purchases. At least it will stabilize somewhat the faltering prices here and may stabilize the stripper wells that are going down the tube and will not be available to America for the production of oil. The way it is paid for is to say: If the President of the United States deems it to be an emergency, then it will be an emergency under the budget. That is not exceptional. We do that for emergencies all the time. We think the oil patch is in a state of emergency.

Mr. President, the head of the National Stripper Well Association, estimated that small producers already have closed 100,000 wells this year, and cut production by 300,000 barrels a day and has been forced to eliminate 10,000 jobs because of falling prices.

Small oil companies are sinking with crude oil prices.

Behind the price drop is the reduced demand in Asia because of its financial crisis, the prospect of Iraq selling more oil and the inability of the OPEC to agree on production cuts.

The state, receives about 30 percent of its funds from oil and gas. Each dollar drop in the price of a barrel of oil translates roughly into a drop of \$20 million in state revenues.

In Oklahoma, the continuation of low oil prices could lead to the permanent abandonment of about three-fourths of Oklahoma's almost 90,000 oil wells.

This amendment will direct the Secretary of Energy to purchase and transport and additional \$420,000,000 of oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve upon a determination by the President that the current market conditions are imperiling domestic oil productions from marginal and small producers.

This is a small step to show support for our domestic oil industry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if I could, I ask Senator BINGAMAN to allow Senator DASCHLE and I to bring up an issue we have been wanting to do, and also say we are working with a number of Senators to see how we might deal with this, see if it can be handled without having to go to a recorded vote. We need a few more minutes. In the meantime, Senator DASCHLE and I would

like to do an exchange here with regard to a unanimous consent.

Mr. President, we need to try to clear up what we are going to do for the balance of the week. Senator DASCHLE and I have been working, back and forth, since the middle of June, trying to come to a unanimous consent agreement on how to handle the health care Patients' Bill of Rights issue. We have had a number of suggestions back and forth. We have not been able to come to agreement. There are ways that legislation could be brought to the floor anyway. But I am sure there would be objections if it were done in a way where there could not be amendments or, from this side, if there were unlimited amendments. But we need to try to see that there is one final opportunity for us to get a way to bring up the health care issue.

I ask unanimous consent the majority leader, after notification of the Democratic leader, shall turn to S. 2330 regarding health care. I further ask, immediately upon its reporting, Senator NICKLES be recognized to offer a substitute amendment making technical changes to the bill, and immediately following the reporting by the clerk, Senator KENNEDY be recognized to offer his Patients' Bill of Rights amendment, with votes occurring on each amendment with all points of order having been waived.

I further ask that three other amendments be in order on each side, for a total of six, to be offered by each leader or their designees, regarding health care. Following the conclusion of debate and following the votes with respect to the listed amendments, the bill be advanced to third reading and the Senate proceed to H.R. 4250, the House companion bill, all after the enacting clause be stricken, the text of S. 2330, as amended, if amended, be inserted, and the Senate proceed to vote at no later than 3 p.m. on Friday, July 31.

To sum up, what I am asking is we would have debate on the two underlying bills, six amendments, three on each side, and of course the votes that would be ordered as a result of that, and finish, then, by 3 on Friday, the 31st. I think we could have a good debate, have some votes, and complete that debate.

I further ask that following the vote, the Senate bill be returned to the calendar.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the majority leader's request?

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object.

Mr. GRAHAM addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would certainly want to reiterate what the majority leader said at the beginning of his comments, which is that we have been negotiating now for some time in an effort to determine how we might bring to the floor the health

care bills offered by the Republican caucus as well as the Democratic caucus. I see Senator GRAHAM standing. There are other bills that may be contemplated in this debate as well.

Our view is that it would be very difficult to have a debate of the importance of what we consider this to be, with the limit of amendments that the majority leader has proposed. We had 56 amendments on the Agriculture appropriations bill. We disposed of them. We had 82 amendments on the Commerce-State-Justice bill. We disposed of them. I would not say, in either case, people felt that was too long a debate to have on an important bill like those two appropriations bills. We had 150 amendments on the Defense authorization bill.

I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader's request be modified to provide for relevant amendments—to limit it to relevant amendments. I think we can have a good debate. We are prepared to limit them to relevant amendments. I have asked my colleagues not to offer the Patients' Bill of Rights amendment to other bills because, in large measure, we have been working in good faith to try to see if we can accommodate a schedule that will allow us to bring it to the floor.

Certainly, I think having an agreement that would allow a debate, limited to relevant amendments, would certainly take into account the concerns that many of our colleagues have raised about being too limited on a bill, and a debate that is as consequential as is this one. So I make that request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader?

Mr. LOTT. Would that be with the agreement that we finish it and have final passage on the two underlying bills by a time certain on Friday?

Mr. DASCHLE. We would not know when we would finish. Obviously, we couldn't agree to a time limit on the bill because we really don't know how long the relevant amendments would take at this point.

Mr. LOTT. That would be our concern, then. There would be no way of knowing how many amendments or how long it would go on.

As the Senator knows, this year we have attempted some bills and we never could quite bring them to a conclusion. I really want to be able to get the Senate to actually vote on a bill that goes to conference. I believe Senator DASCHLE wants that, too. I am afraid, if we just go into it with relevant amendments with no limits—we only had 18 amendments, as I recall, on the tobacco bill. We stayed on that for 4 weeks. We only have 5 weeks and 2 days left, so I don't think we could do that.

Let me say to Senator GRAHAM, I know he and others are working on another bill. What we could do, we do have, under my proposal, three amendments on each side. We could make their substitute one of those three amendments. I presume that would be

what we would probably do on our side, if there is one that is developed as an alternative. Alternatives would have an opportunity under that proposal.

Since we couldn't get any kind of guarantee that we will get it to a conclusion, I have to object to the addition that Senator DASCHLE proposed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DASCHLE. In that case, I will have to object to the offer made by the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it will be the intent of the leadership after we finish the Treasury-Postal appropriations bill that we will go to the Department of Defense appropriations bill. We would like to lay it down tonight and be prepared to stay on it.

I say to all Senators, that will be the final bill that we will take up this week. When we finish that bill, we will be prepared to recess for the August recess. That can be tomorrow night, that can be Friday morning, that can be Friday afternoon or Friday night. It will be our intent to stay on it, with cooperation from both sides of the aisle, to complete that very important Department of Defense appropriations bill.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, to clarify a comment just made by the majority leader, I know that he has indicated to me we will move to the Executive Calendar before the end of the week.

Mr. LOTT. Yes, we have a number of nominations that I believe we can clear, that we need to clear. We will be working on that beginning tomorrow night. I thought maybe we could do some tomorrow night and then some more on Friday, after we complete the Department of Defense appropriations bill. I yield the floor, Mr. President.

TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senator DASCHLE and I have been working to identify the remaining amendments and the time that will be necessary to debate those amendments. I thank Senator DASCHLE, again, for the time he spent on that.

I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments, as previously identified on the consent agreement, be limited to the following times, to be equally divided:

Senator BINGAMAN with regard to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, 20 minutes;

Senator BAUCUS regarding post office closings, 10 minutes;

Senator MCCONNELL regarding the Federal Elections Commission, 10 minutes;

Senator GLENN regarding FEC, 10 minutes;

Senator HARKIN regarding drug control, 30 minutes;

And Senator WELLSTONE regarding naming of a post office, 10 minutes.

We will continue to work with the Senators on this list to see if we can work them out and get them accepted, but we need to get this order lined up and identify what those amendments are to be.

Mr. GLENN. Reserving the right to object, I wonder if we can have 15 minutes on my side. We have a couple of people who want to make short remarks.

Mr. LOTT. I would modify that request, then, so we will have 15 minutes on each side?

Mr. GLENN. Yes.

Mr. LOTT. Now we are talking 30 minutes.

Mr. GLENN. That is right, instead of 20.

Mr. LOTT. Then Senator MCCONNELL will need 30 minutes. So you are talking about 30 minutes on each side—30 minutes equally divided or 30 minutes total?

Mr. GLENN. Thirty total.

Mr. LOTT. It would be 30 minutes equally divided on the McConnell amendment and 30 minutes on the Glenn amendment.

I remind our colleagues, it is a quarter till 7. I can't think of any profound statement that can be made that will take 30 minutes that will affect one iota the vote or its outcome. If the Senators will be willing to yield some of that time, that will be very helpful.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I appreciate my amendment being on the list. I would like 20 minutes equally divided.

Mr. LOTT. Baucus amendment, 20 minutes equally divided.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the majority leader's request?

Mr. WELLSTONE. Yes, there is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Objection on two parts. First of all, with regard to the Gene McCarthy Post Office, if we are going to debate this, I would like to have that 20 minutes equally divided. And second of all, I did not agree—I thought we might reach an agreement—I did not agree to withdraw my other amendment. There is another amendment that should be added to the list that will deal with mental health or substance abuse as it affects Federal employees. I would like to have 20 minutes equally divided on that.

Mr. President, let me just add, I have been here in the afternoon ready to go with amendments, so I am not trying to delay anything.

Mr. DASCHLE. How much time did the Senator want on the second amendment?

Mr. WELLSTONE. Twenty minutes equally, if it is not accepted—maybe it

will be acceptable—20 minutes equally divided.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I believe this is sprouting wings here. I think I am going to at this point withdraw this agreement and notify Members I will move to table all amendments when offered. Unless we can get reasonable time agreements—we are now talking 1 hour, 2 hours, 3½ hours. What the heck, I will just move to table, and we will have a vote on each one of them.

Mr. BAUCUS. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. LOTT. I will be glad to yield.

Mr. BAUCUS. I say to the leader, I am willing to reduce mine down to 2 minutes if the Senator will agree to my amendment. (Laughter.)

Mr. LOTT. That would take unanimous consent. You might get my agreement, but I am not sure you will get the rest of them.

Mr. BAUCUS. If I get your agreement, I will reduce mine to 2 minutes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Will the leader yield for and observation?

Mr. LOTT. I yield to the Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I say to the majority leader, Senator GLENN suggested that my amendment will require 30 minutes, 15 minutes on a side, and then he wanted 30 minutes for his amendment. I had offered him earlier in the day that we could adopt them both on voice vote which will require no time at all for the Senate. If I understand the GLENN amendment, it is adding \$2.8 million for the FEC; is that the GLENN amendment?

Mr. GLENN. Correct.

Mr. LOTT. Let me renew the request because Senator DASCHLE and I have other things we would like to do. If you want to talk and have votes, we will just be having votes every 20 minutes the rest of the night. We are not going to stack them. You need to be reasonable. The request as it now stands—does Senator GRAHAM have an addition?

Mr. GRAHAM. The central Florida drug trafficking area amendment.

Mr. LOTT. I understand you have an amendment in there which they are attempting to work out.

Mr. GRAHAM. I hope we can work it out. I want to be certain I am protected in the event.

Mr. LOTT. I renew my request with the present conditions:

Bingaman amendment for 20 minutes;

Baucus amendment for 20 minutes;

McConnell amendment for 30 minutes;

Glenn amendment for 30 minutes;

Harkin amendment for 30 minutes;

And Senator WELLSTONE, two amendments, 20 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, if you are not on this list, does this mean you are precluded from offering your amendment?

Mr. LOTT. No, you would be in the order about 10 or 11 o'clock.