

in cosponsoring this resolution: Senators MCCAIN, LEVIN, HUTCHISON, MILLER, BIDEN, JEFFORDS, LANDRIEU, BENNETT, MURRAY, JOHNSON, CARNAHAN, DAYTON, CONRAD, KENNEDY, DURBIN, HATCH, SESSIONS, CLINTON, and ALLEN. I also thank the entire Senate for adopting this measure by unanimous consent last evening.

I am reminded of the line from one of Wellington's troops that: "In time of war, and not before, God and the soldier men adore. And in time of peace, with all things righted, God is forgotten and the soldier slighted."

Mr. President, I am honored to live in a country that forgets not God and does not slight the soldier.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Missouri is recognized.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate remain in a period of morning business with Senators speaking for up to 10 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator DURBIN or his designee will control the floor from 11 to noon and from 1 to 2 p.m.—and I ask within that timeframe, if no one seeks the floor, I may be recognized to introduce a bill—and Senator THOMAS or his designee will control the floor from noon to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 3 p.m.

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

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes for the purpose of introducing legislation.

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

(The remarks of Mr. BOND pertaining to the introduction of S. 967 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BOND. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

RURAL AMERICA

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, some weeks ago, I was on an airplane, and I had a laptop computer with me and my briefcase. Like most of my colleagues sitting on an airplane, I went through my briefcase and found a letter from the U.S. Park Service. I read the letter,

and it provoked me to get my laptop computer out of its case and put it on the tray table, and I started typing.

I created a message for the U.S. Park Service. Here is what their letter said to me. The U.S. Park Service wrote me a letter and said in the Teddy Roosevelt National Park, one of their picnic grounds was being colonized by prairie dogs. So they were going to do something called a "scoping" exercise and an EA, called an environmental assessment, to think about spending a quarter of a million dollars to move the picnic grounds.

I read and reread this Park Service letter about the scoping and the environmental assessment they were doing to spend a quarter of a million dollars to move the picnic grounds, and I sent them a letter.

What I said to the Park Service was that I found it interesting that they had the time to do scoping and EAs on these kinds of issues. I said, at the moment, we are in a rather complicated budget fight in Congress, but you have solicited my opinion, so let me give you a few thoughts.

I said: I am not unsympathetic to prairie dogs. I think they are cute little creatures. They, unlike the rats, were blessed with a furry tail and a button nose and they have a good deal more human sympathy, therefore, than rats do.

I asked the Park Service what would have been the Park Service's response if it had been a group of rats that had colonized the picnic area rather than prairie dogs. Then I thought better of asking because maybe they would have had a larger EA and scoping mission.

My point to them was: Do not waste the taxpayers' money; do not move the picnic grounds, move the prairie dogs.

I said: When I was growing up, about 50 miles from where they have this problem in the Badlands, I was growing up in Regent, ND, we had a group of rats "colonize," to use the Park Service's word, our horse barn. I was about 14 at the time, and my dad said the rats could live a very good life just 1 mile from our barn in the town dumps, which is where a lot of rats live, and he said he would like me to enlist a couple of my schoolmates and see if we couldn't move the rats.

It turns out these rats were no match for three 14-year-old boys. We very quickly retook the Dorgan horse barn. We understood that we could do that without a lot of effort.

Getting back to the prairie dogs, I told the Park Service that I figure there are about 1.4 million acres of ground in the Badlands in North Dakota in which prairie dogs can, do, and are colonizing. They have many prairie dogs in the Badlands. So the prairie dogs can colonize in a million and a half acres or so. They just cannot colonize in this picnic area.

I said: The way to handle these prairie dogs is to find somebody who can communicate with them. That is not hard. We have a lot of folks who ranch

and farm and spend a lot of time around animals, and one very quickly learns how to communicate with animals. I raised some horses. We raised cattle, and we learned how to communicate with animals.

I said to the Park Service: If you do not have anybody who knows how to communicate with an animal, go out in a ranching area and get some instruction, and once they have taught you how to send certain communications to animals, go back and have a little discussion with those prairie dogs and tell the prairie dogs they are not welcome in the picnic area; that you do not want to spend a quarter of a million dollars of the taxpayers' money to move the picnic area, and you want them to leave. And if they will not leave, I said to the Park Service, here is a cost-free way to deal with it: Get about three 14-year-old boys from somewhere in that area, and they will take care of that problem real quick for you.

As I was sitting on this airplane thinking about all the things we confront in rural America—yes in and near the Badlands where I grew up—I was thinking that we are not short of prairie dogs; we are short of people. We have Federal agencies that want to treat lightly that which is serious and then treat seriously that which is light, and they do not quite understand.

The real problem in our part of the country, where the Park Service is worried about prairie dogs and picnic areas, is that human beings are becoming an endangered species. All of our rural counties are shrinking like prunes. The counties are shrinking in population. People are leaving, not coming in. Farmers and ranchers are leaving the land at an alarming rate. Small towns are shrinking. Many rural counties are very fast becoming a wilderness area. That is not by Federal designation, it is the way things are working in rural America.

I said to the Park Service: When I received your letter about prairie dogs, picnic areas, and environmental assessments, and scoping, it just seemed to be such an unusual bureaucratic effort for such a minor issue.

Having prairie dogs move into a picnic area, in my judgment, does not rank up there with having people moving out of rural America. So I said: You have to excuse me for being a little impatient.

Just once, I told the Park Service, I would like to see a Federal agency crank up a little energy, a little emotion about the real problems facing rural America.

Have my colleagues ever heard of a Federal agency say: This county has shrunk 50 percent; we are going to do a scoping exercise to figure out what we can do to solve that problem.

Have my colleagues ever heard of a Federal agency cranking up an effort to do an environmental assessment of what is happening with the creation of