

Following the cloture votes, the Senate will resume consideration of the VA-HUD appropriations bill. Senators BOND and MIKULSKI reached an agreement yesterday which should bring the bill to a conclusion early today. We may be able to finish this morning or early afternoon.

In addition, today we may consider the nomination of MG Robert T. Clark to be a lieutenant general in the U.S. Army. This nomination will be considered under a 2-hour time limit which was agreed to last week.

Finally, I add that we will also be scheduling any conference reports that may become available. Rollcall votes will occur throughout the day today and Members will be notified as they are scheduled.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

THOMAS C. DORR TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Thomas C. Dorr, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas C. Dorr, of Iowa, to be Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development; and Thomas C. Dorr, of Iowa, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Commodity Credit Corporation.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 10:30 shall be divided equally between the chairman and ranking member of the Agriculture Committee or their designees.

The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume under the order.

As chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, I am pleased to announce that the committee acted favorably on the nomination of Thomas Dorr to be Under Secretary for the Department of Agriculture for Rural Development and has reported that nomination to the Senate. We understand that considerable debate time is planned to be used and so the leader decided to file a cloture on the nomination so we could bring this matter to a conclusion. We will have a vote on cloture after the debates. I hope the Senate will vote to cut off debate and we can move to a vote on this nomination and confirm Mr. Dorr in this job as Under Secretary of Agriculture.

Mr. Dorr has served capably under a recess appointment which was made by the President on August 9, 2002. The Senate committee reviewed his qualifications and found him to be well qualified. Hearings were held back in 2001 when the other party was in the majority and controlled the Senate Agriculture Committee. Opposition to the nomination of Mr. Dorr was expressed at that time, and the nomination was virtually blocked and returned to the President without being acted upon.

The President resubmitted that nomination, and it has languished, in effect, for a good while, while Senators who have been opposed to the nomination have expressed their concerns. It is clear that the nominee is very well qualified, not only because of his experience in business and his knowledge of rural America and the problems we face, but his understanding of the job at the Department of Agriculture which he has been asked to assume.

Mr. Dorr oversees the Department's rural development mission area that consists of three agencies, \$14 billion of annual funding authority for loans, grants and technical assistance to rural residents, communities and businesses, and an \$80 billion portfolio of existing infrastructure loans to rural America.

Rural development has over 7,000 employees across the United States, in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the western Pacific trust territories. This is a big job. It is an enormous responsibility and requires someone with a business background and with administrative skills to manage an agency of this size.

Mr. Dorr has a broad base of experience to draw upon in agriculture, as well as financial and business experience. He has served as a member of the board of directors of the Seventh District Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, the Iowa Board of Regents from 1991 to 1997, and as a member and officer of the Iowa and National Corn Growers Associations.

Prior to this appointment, Mr. Dorr was the president of a family agribusiness company consisting of corn and soybean farms, a State-licensed commercial grain elevator and warehouse, and two limited liability companies. Mr. Dorr is a graduate of Morningside College, has a BS degree in business administration, and he is from Marcus, IA. The support for the nomination is widespread. I ask unanimous consent that copies of letters endorsing his nomination be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NOVEMBER 3, 2003.

DEAR SENATOR: The below signed organizations urge you to vote in support of the confirmation of Thomas Dorr as Under Secretary of Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture. The position of Under Secretary of Rural Development is critical in a number of ways to the success of rural America and agriculture communities.

Mr. Dorr has proven that he has the skill and experience necessary to lead USDA's Rural Development efforts. The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Nutrition recognizes the importance of this position and favorably reported (14-7) Mr. Dorr's nomination in bipartisan fashion on June 18, 2003.

The confirmation of Mr. Dorr will allow these vital programs the greatest possibility of success. Mr. Dorr deserves an up or down vote in the United States Senate, we urge you to vote for his confirmation.

Sincerely,
 American Farm Bureau Federation.
 American Meat Institute.
 American Soybean Association.
 National Association of Wheat Growers.
 National Cattlemen's Beef Association.
 National Chicken Council.
 National Corn Growers Association.
 National Cotton Council.
 National Milk Producers Federation.
 National Pork Producers Council.
 National Turkey Federation.
 United Egg Association.
 United Egg Producers.
 United Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Association.
 USA Rice Federation.

OFFICE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
 OF PUBLIC BLACK COLLEGES,

October 2, 2003.

Hon. TOM HARKIN,
 U.S. Senate, Hart Senate Office Building,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR HARKIN: As chair of the Council of 1890 Presidents/Chancellors, I am writing to express our appreciation for your continued leadership and to convey our support of Thomas C. Dorr, Under Secretary, Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

For your information, the Council represents the nation's 18 Black-land-grant colleges/universities and is a policymaking body that is committed to advancing the land-grant mission. The 1890s are located in 17 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands and enroll nearly 50 percent of all students attending HBCUs. We work closely with the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and provide leadership for the Council of 1890 Colleges/Universities.

As ranking member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, your support of the 1890s has made a significant difference in the infrastructure of our institutions and in our ability to assume greater responsibility for advancing and securing the nation's food and agricultural enterprise. Guided by our 1890 Strategic Plan (copy enclosed), our universities are investing heavily and wisely in:

Serving as a vital force in the conduct of teaching, research and extension and public service; serving as an adjunct to the American economy; expanding and creating new partnerships with socially and economically distressed communities and government, business and industry; transforming the knowledge we produce into solutions designed to improve the quality of life of farmers and families in rural communities and; providing a seamless network of resources and services to key stakeholders in the food and agricultural enterprise.

While these achievements are worth noting, the 1890s continue to face nearly insurmountable barriers in accessing the breath of programs administered by USDA. In response, Under Secretary Dorr has been an invaluable resource in helping us build new and complementary relationships within and without USDA. Most recently, he represented the Department at a town hall