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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by Rev. Joan Thirkettle from San Diego, CA, Salvation Army of San Diego.

PRAYER

The Reverend Joan Thirkettle, Salvation Army of San Diego, offered the following prayer:

The world new each day, Almighty God, we give You thanks and praise. The days, months, and years You number and sustain. Your wisdom invites this Senate to share the daily administration of this Your United States. Your movement is heard in the walk of the people. The grass blows, the mountains tower, the waters slap the shores, all echo, You among us. Come with Your residence casting Your knowledge and dreams into the debates and decisions made for "We, the People." Take the deliberations of this body fueled with questions, doubts, and varying degrees of what is best and right, and bring consensus of shared patriot leadership for the Republic. It is You, God, who reigns. Guide these Senators as they champion justice, liberty, and peace. Counsel them as they speak, debate, and struggle with the complexities of domestic and global concerns. The mantle of trust is given these persons by the people, Mighty God. Help them carry this heavy mantle in the long hours of work and decision-making. Bring each Senator a calm and a confidence of heart this day and in the days to come. Thank You that You have made them ambassadors of Your work. Travel with them in peace. May their work declare Your intentions, Eternal God. This we pray, Lord, in Your name. Amen.

Mrs. BOXER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished Senator from California.

THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you so much, Mr. President. I will just take a moment of the Senate's time to say how really thrilled I am to have heard the prayer given by the Reverend Joan Thirkettle this morning. I want to thank the Senate Chaplain, Dr. Ogilvie, for inviting her here today at my request.

To hear the sounds of a woman's voice coming from that particular place in the Senate Chamber is not that usual, but it is becoming more usual as we see more and more women go into this field.

I also say that it is very important because this month we do celebrate Women's History Month. So it is quite appropriate the Reverend Thirkettle spoke to us today.

There is one last point I want to make. She has come a long way from San Diego, CA, a beautiful part of the world. She spends her waking hours helping high school students, helping with family reeducation, helping with reunification, helping with job readiness, working with children, working with the Salvation Army in charge of shelters for youth and running the Christmas toy drive. So this is a woman who lives her beliefs.

I listened to her words today. She offers us, I think, some very good guidance. I thank her, and I thank Dr. Ogilvie.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CAMPBELL). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana [Mr. LUGAR] is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, Senator DOLE, let me say, for the information of all Senators, the Senate will immediately resume consideration of the farm bill conference report under the remaining time agreement reached yesterday.

Following that debate, the conference report will be set aside, and the Senate will begin 30 minutes of debate regarding the cloture motion with respect to the Kennedy amendment to the Presidio legislation.

Following that debate, the Senate will begin a vote on the adoption of the farm bill conference report, to be followed immediately by a vote on invoking cloture with respect to the Kennedy amendment. Additional rollcall votes are possible throughout today's session of the Senate.

AGRICULTURAL MARKET TRANSITION ACT—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2854, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2854) a bill to modify the operation of certain agricultural programs, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by a majority of the conferees.

The Senate resumed consideration of the conference report.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana [Mr. LUGAR], is recognized.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, yesterday in the beginning of the debate on the farm bill conference report, much of the debate centered upon title I, which is the Agricultural Market Transition Program. And, indeed, this is an extraordinarily important title for producers in this country. Senators reviewed the fact that the new farm bill will offer maximum flexibility to farmers in choosing what crops to plant and how many acres they will plant to meet market conditions in this country and in the world.

Likewise, the nonrecourse marketing assistance loans will remain. They are a safety net, as well as a method of managing income and operations, for producers.

Not mentioned yesterday, but clearly still in the farm bill, is a peanut program, modified somewhat during debate in both the House and the Senate, a sugar program and a milk price support and marketing order program. The Federal Dairy Export Program, the northeast dairy compact, payment limitations, commodity credit all come under this title I, the Agricultural Market Transition Program. I have no doubt, Mr. President, there will be more debate on that issue this morning. But I want to center on additional aspects of the farm bill that are extraordinarily important to all Americans.

Title II, the trade title, contains Public Law 480 and related programs. The conference report reauthorizes Food for Peace and allows private sector participation for the first time. The Food Security Wheat Reserve is renamed the "Food Security Commodity Reserve" to reflect that corn, rice, and sorghum are added as eligible commodities. A 4-million-metric-ton cap is placed on the reserve and access to reserve commodities is made easier.

Mr. President, there is also a provision for agricultural trade. The conference agreement reauthorizes several trade and export programs, with additional emphasis on high-value and value-added products. The Secretary is directed to monitor compliance with the agriculture provisions of the Uruguay round agreement of GATT and report violations to the United States Trade Representative. Agriculture producers are given additional protection against economic effects of agricultural embargoes.

In addition, several unnecessary and outdated provisions of Federal agricultural trade law are repealed.

The trade title contains a market access program. The Market Promotion Program is renamed the "Market Access Program" to more accurately reflect program goals. Expenditures are capped at \$90 million per year, and reforms are implemented to restrict participation to small businesses, farmer-owned cooperatives, and agricultural groups.

The Export Enhancement Program is contained in title II. EEP expenditures are capped at \$350 million a year in 1996; \$250 million in 1997; \$500 million in 1998; \$550 million in 1999; \$579 million in 2000; \$478 million in 2001 and 2002.

For the years 2000 to 2002, the funding levels for EEP represent the maximum allowable expenditures under GATT. In addition, the Secretary is given authority to subsidize the export of intermediate value-added products.

Title III of the farm bill contains the conservation programs and, first of all, of course, is the Conservation Reserve Program, the CRP, which gives the Secretary authority to enter into new contracts and to extend CRP contracts. The authorized maximum acreage in CRP is maintained at 36.4 million acres. It also allows participants to terminate CRP contracts, except on those lands that are deemed to be of high environmental value. Funds saved due to termination of contracts may be used by the Secretary to enroll new lands in the program.

I point out, parenthetically, Mr. President, this arguably is the largest conservation program, including one of the most important environmental aspects the Senate will adopt this year.

The Wetlands Reserve Program is retained with modifications to encourage the use of temporary easements and cost-share restorations.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program [EQIP], is instituted. This program targets approximately \$1.2 billion over 7 years to assist crop and livestock producers to deal with environmental and conservation improvements on their farms. Assistance can be used for animal waste management facilities, terraces, waterways, filterstrips or other structural and management practices to protect water, soil, and related resources. Assistance to individual operations is capped at \$10,000 a year, for a maximum of 5 years. Large operators, as defined by the Secretary, will be ineligible for assistance.

Other new conservation programs include the Farms for the Future Program providing \$35 million to preserve farmland from commercial development. A new conservation farm option offers producers an additional alternative in meeting conservation goals. A Flood Risk Reduction Program is also included to provide farmers incentives to take out of production frequently flooded lands.

The Conservation Compliance Reform Program gives producers enhanced flexibility to modify conservation practices if they can demonstrate that the new practice achieves equal or greater erosion control. Variances from conservation compliance can now be granted on account of adverse weather or disease, and program payment penalties can be adjusted to be commensurate with the violation.

Swampbuster reform is included in title III. The Natural Resources Conservation Service is designated to lead

Federal agencies in wetlands delineation and regulation on grazing lands. The agreement stipulates that current wetlands delineations remain valid until a producer requests a review. Penalties can now be adjusted to fit the wetlands violation. Exceptions can be granted for good faith. And wetlands mitigation options are expanded.

Title IV, a very important title, is the Federal Food Stamp Program. The conference agreement reauthorizes the Food Stamp Program for 2 years while Congress continues to work on comprehensive welfare reform legislation.

Mr. President, this issue has come before this body at least twice before. First of all, in the form of the Balanced Budget Act, where the food stamp provisions were a part of the farm bill and likewise a part of welfare reform. The Senate has considered separately welfare reform with food stamp provisions in that legislation.

As the Chair knows, in the case of both the welfare reform and the Balanced Budget Act, President Clinton vetoed this legislation. Therefore, it has been set aside. This farm bill recaptures now and reauthorizes the Food Stamp Program for 2 years pending action either in our committee, that is, the Agriculture Committee, or action by the Congress with regard to welfare reform that might encompass the Food Stamp Program.

Title V is a miscellaneous title, but an important one in the collection of programs that come under it. Crop insurance is one of these programs. The conference agreement eliminates the mandatory nature of catastrophic crop insurance, but requires producers to waive all Federal disaster assistance if they opt not to purchase catastrophic insurance. Dual delivery of crop insurance is eliminated in those States that have adequate private crop insurance delivery.

The bill corrects a provision of current law by amending the Federal Crop Insurance Act to include seed crops. Eligibility to purchase crop insurance is no longer linked to conservation compliance and swampbuster for producers who choose not to participate in the farm programs.

The Office of Risk Management is provided for. We establish in this legislation, within the Department of Agriculture, the Office of Risk Management to oversee and supervise the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. The bill directs the Secretary to establish a business interruption insurance program that allows producers of program crops to obtain revenue insurance coverage. The Options Pilot Program is also extended through the year 2002. The Office of Risk Management is charged with oversight of these pilot programs.

Mr. President, the farm bill includes an Everglades Agricultural Area provision. The conference agreement provides \$200 million for land acquisition in the Florida Everglades for the purpose of environmental restoration. An

additional \$100 million in Federal support will be financed through the sale or swap of other federally held land in Florida.

The farm bill provides a fund for rural America. And \$300 million is provided for the fund in the years 1997 through 1999. This was a request of the President of the United States, and the Secretary of Agriculture placed a high priority on this fund. The Secretary is required to spend at least one-third of the amount on research and one-third of the amount on rural development. The other one-third of the money can be allocated to either purpose at the discretion of the Secretary. All of the funding must be spent through existing research and rural development programs.

The Agricultural Quarantine and Inspection provision appears in the conference report, which amends the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 to allow the Secretary to collect and spend fees collected over \$100 million to cover the cost for providing quarantine and inspection services for imports.

The Safe Meat and Poultry Inspection Panel is created in this farm bill. The Panel of scientists within the Food Safety and Inspection Service will be charged with the responsibility of reviewing all inspection policies from a scientific perspective. The Panel's report and the Secretary's responses must be published in the Federal Register. State-inspected meat was discussed in our conference report. Within 90 days of enactment, the Secretary shall report and recommend to the Congress the steps necessary to achieve interstate shipment of State-inspected meat products.

Title VI of the conference report deals with USDA Farm Lending Program reforms. The conference report redirects farm lending programs to their original intent. Authority to make loans for a variety of non-agricultural purposes such as recreation facilities and small business enterprises is repealed. The Secretary is given authority to use collection agencies to recover delinquent loans. The agreement prohibits additional loans to delinquent borrowers and streamlines procedures for disposal of inventory property. A portion of loan funding is reserved for new and beginning farmers.

I point out, Mr. President, that that set of provisions comes after extensive hearings by the Agriculture Committee in which we found that borrowers sometimes are already delinquent and the Department was obligated, under previous law, to lend money to them in any event. Some of these obvious, glaring deficiencies have been corrected. I commend both committees and the conference for that provision.

Title VII deals with rural development. The Rural Community Advancement Program is authorized, and the Secretary may provide grants and direct and guaranteed loans and other as-

sistance to meet rural development needs across the country. Funding under the Rural Community Advanced Program will be allocated to three areas: First of all, rural community facilities; second, rural utilities; and, third, a rural business and cooperative development. The new program provides greater flexibility, State and local decisionmaking, and a simplified uniform application process.

The Water and Waste Water Systems. Authorization for these systems is increased from \$500 million to \$590 million.

In telemedicine and distance learning programs, the conference agreement reauthorizes and streamlines these programs. Under the programs, the Secretary can make grants and loans to assist rural communities with construction of facilities and services, to provide distance learning and telemedicine service. Funding is authorized at \$100 million annually.

Title VIII is the research title. The conference agreement reauthorizes Federal agricultural research, extension, and education programs for 2 years. This will allow Congress to continue ongoing review of these programs and determine how best to use the \$1.7 billion in annual agricultural research, extension, and education spending. Additional research dollars are made available under this bill through the fund for rural America that I discussed earlier and which President Clinton and Secretary Glickman have championed.

Title IX, promotion, the generic commodity promotion program. The Secretary is directed to establish such a program. Under this program, interested industries could petition the Department of Agriculture for the establishment of a promotion program. Currently, each commodity must receive specific authorization from Congress to have a promotion program. Recognizing the generic program will not be operational for some time, the conference agreement authorizes new promotion programs for popcorn, canola, and kiwi fruit.

The full conference report was printed, I point out, Mr. President, in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of Monday, March 25, 1996, so that Senators have had an opportunity to review this conference report. The report came after discussion of as many as 500 differences between the House and the Senate bills. During an extensive and constructive conference of the two bodies last Wednesday and last Thursday, all issues were resolved. It is in that spirit that this conference report came to the Senate last evening and for further debate today.

Mr. President, let me simply review the fact that the time limit covering this report is 6 hours. Three of those hours are controlled by the distinguished Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE, an hour by the ranking Democratic member of the Agriculture Committee, and 2 hours by myself. Ap-

proximately an hour and a quarter of debate occurred last evening. The remainder of the debate lies ahead of us. Hopefully, Senators who are controlling that time would be prepared to yield back that time to expedite the work of the Senate.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Patrick Sweeney, an employee of the General Accounting Office who has been detailed to the Agriculture Committee, be granted privilege of the floor during the pendency of consideration of the farm bill conference report.

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

Mr. LUGAR. Noting no other Senators prepared to debate the issue, I suggest the absence of a quorum, with the time to be equally charged against the time allocated to the three Senators controlling time in this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll. The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. 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. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask to take time that has been allotted to me under the unanimous consent agreement.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we spent a lot of months of very, very hard work to craft this farm bill. Today, we are completing the final legislative step in the farm bill process. I am glad that Secretary Glickman has said that he will recommend that the bill be signed.

The Secretary is one of the most knowledgeable Secretaries of Agriculture with which I have ever worked. He has been a Member of the Congress. He has worked on many farm bills. He knows, as I do, that nobody ever gets everything they want in a farm bill. You have to bring in a number of competing interests and ultimately make a judgment of whether the bill should be signed or not. I believe it should be signed. I concur with his judgment.

I am also pleased that the President said he would sign the farm bill. In my discussions with the White House and with the Secretary, I have told them this is a good bipartisan bill that proves we can work together.

We were in a situation, Mr. President, where we were not going to be able to pass a Democratic or a Republican farm bill. However, if we worked as we have in the past in a bipartisan fashion, we could pass a very good farm bill.

There are many who had a hand in this legislation. First and foremost of those is the chairman of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, the senior Senator from Indiana, Senator LUGAR.