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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m., and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Dear God, we say with the author of Hebrews, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul."—Hebrews 6:19.

Thank You for the anchor of hope in You we have for the storms of life. We lower our anchor and it holds in the bedrock of Your faithfulness in spite of the billows of adversity and the blasts of conflict. We can ride out the storms of difficulties and discouragement because we know You will sustain us. We share the psalmist's confidence, "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. For in You, O Lord, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God."—Psalms 130:5, 38:15.

Our hope is not in the reliability of people, the predictability of circumstances, or the security of human power. Our hope is in Your grace and truth. You will neither leave nor forsake us. Keep us anchored today so we may not drift from our commitment to serve You. We claim Your destiny for our Nation. Throughout this day may we feel the tug of the anchor and know that we are secure. In the name of our Lord. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, Senator LOTT, is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today there will be a period for morning business until the hour of 1 p.m., with the time equally divided between the two parties. No rollcall votes are expected during the day today.

For the information of all Senators, the Senate is expected to reconvene on

Wednesday with the expectation that the session will be largely devoted to morning business, and rollcall votes would not be anticipated on Wednesday.

Senators should be aware that on Thursday the Senate will be attending a joint meeting of Congress starting at 11:45 a.m. to hear an address by French President Jacques Chirac. Following that joint meeting, the Senate is expected to debate and vote on cloture on or in relation to the Lugar-Dole farm bill.

Additional votes could occur during the day on Thursday, and even possibly on Friday. As we get additional agreements or information on that, we will advise the Members.

MEASURE READ THE SECOND TIME—S. 1541

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill on the calendar that is due for its second reading, which is the farm bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bill for the second time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1541) to extend, reform, and improve agricultural commodity, trade, conservation, and other programs, and for other purposes.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I object to further consideration of this matter at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. INHOFE). Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, there will probably be some action that will be suggested or offered with regard to the farm bill in a few minutes.

At this time, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

If the Senator from Alaska will withhold for a moment?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Certainly.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business until the hour of 1 p.m., with the time equally divided between the two leaders.

The Senator from Alaska.

AMTRAK'S DECISION TO CHANGE TRAIN NAMES

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am a bit of a railroad buff, and there have been some recent changes relative to the operation of Amtrak that I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues this morning.

I think it is fair to say that it is important that we consider our traditions, and how our traditions have really brought us together as a nation and preserved the fabric of our culture.

It has been 30 years ago that we switched our telephones from exchange names to all-digit dialing. I think it is fair to say that while it increased the efficiency, it lost some of its personality. I recall we had Black 789, White 243, Green 910. We had an operator who

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



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would occasionally talk to you if you had a problem. Yet, this change was necessary because of the expansion of telephone service and it produced economic efficiencies.

However, Mr. President, I note with sadness the decision of Amtrak to stop using the historical and traditional names for train service in the Northeast corridor. Last week, the Wall Street Journal reported that Amtrak had decided that, for the Yankee Clipper, along with the train called the Mohawk, the train called the Mayflower, the train called the Connecticut Yankee, the overnight train to Boston, the Night Owl, and nearly all the other traditional names will no longer be used. In their place, nearly all of Amtrak's Northeast corridor trains will be referred to as the Northeast Direct, followed by a number such as 142, 147, 148. I really cannot understand this decision because I cannot see where it necessarily affects the efficiency or service to the public.

A spokeswoman for Amtrak was quoted as saying these names are a colorful part of the past but really not helpful today. According to the spokeswoman, "If you hear 'the Catskill,' it doesn't really tell you where you're going," and that may be true, but certainly the Northeast Direct 147 tells travelers even less. At least the Connecticut Yankee suggests the train is headed to New England; the Northeast Direct 147 really tells you nothing. You do not know where it is headed.

Mr. President, yesterday I wrote to the president of Amtrak, Mr. Tom Downs, and urged Amtrak to reconsider this decision. Again, I appeal to Amtrak in the sense that these are names that are part of the American heritage. I think it is a heritage and tradition that is partially a public trust, if you will. Unilaterally deciding to change these names, I guess, would be equivalent, perhaps, to having the Interior Department redesignate Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks as Western Park 1, Western Park 2, and perhaps Acadia National Park as Eastern Park 4.

Since 1971, Amtrak has received about \$13 billion in Federal funding to help cover its operating and labor costs. Legislation which is currently on the Senate calendar, S. 1395, would establish an intercity passenger rail trust fund. The lion's share of whose funds would go to Amtrak. The proposal calls for Amtrak to receive more than \$2 billion over the next 4 years.

In my opinion, Amtrak has made a mistake in changing the names of the historic trains of the Northeast corridor by replacing them with numbers. I urge Amtrak to reverse this decision.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the letter which I sent to Amtrak's president be printed in the RECORD.

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

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, January 29, 1996.

Mr. THOMAS DOWNS,
President, Amtrak, 60 Massachusetts Avenue
NE, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. DOWNS: The Thursday, January 25 edition of the Wall Street Journal reports that Amtrak has decided to stop using the traditional names for train service in the Northeast corridor. In conversations with Amtrak officials, my staff has confirmed that Amtrak has decided that the "Yankee Clipper," "The Mohawk," "Mayflower," "Connecticut Yankee," the overnight to Boston, "The Night Owl," and nearly all the others, will no longer be used.

It appears that nearly all of Amtrak's Northeast corridor trains will be referred to as "Northeast Direct" followed by a number such as 142 or 147. Quite frankly, I cannot understand this decision.

A spokeswoman for Amtrak was quoted as saying that these names were colorful, but not helpful. According to this spokeswoman, "if you hear 'the Catskill,' it doesn't really tell you where you're going." That may be true. But certainly, Northeast Direct 147 tells travelers even less. At least, the Connecticut Yankee suggests the train is headed to New England. Northeast Direct 147 tells you nothing.

Mr. Downs, I urge you immediately reconsider this decision. These names are part of tradition. And it is a tradition that is partially a public trust. It is nearly equivalent to having the Interior Department redesignate Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks as Western Parks 1 and 2.

As you know, since 1971, Amtrak has received \$13 billion in federal funding to help cover its operating capital and labor costs. Legislation that is currently on the Senate calendar (S. 1395) would establish an Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund, the lion's share of whose funds would go to Amtrak. The proposal calls for Amtrak to receive more than \$2 billion over the next four years.

I believe Amtrak has made a mistake and I believe you ought to fix it immediately.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

FRANK MURKOWSKI,
U.S. Senator.

INCREASE IN THE DEBT CEILING

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to talk briefly about another matter that this body is going to be asked to address in the very near future, and that is to increase the debt ceiling.

As the President and my colleagues know, the authorization to issue debt is limited with a cap. And that cap is \$4.9 trillion. It is a debt so inconceivable that no one can comprehend how large \$4.9 trillion is.

Currently, Mr. President, we are looking in the fiscal year just ended at a deficit of about \$165 billion. That is a significant figure. But we cannot stop there because there is a further application of interest, and the interest cost on the \$4.9 trillion is about \$235 billion. And it should be noted that currently interest rates are relatively low. The effective rate of interest is probably somewhere in the area of 5.5 to 6.5 percent on this \$4.9 trillion.

Back in December 1980, the prime rate in the United States was 20.5 percent. One can only visualize what the

interest cost would be. And this interest has to be paid because the individuals who hold Treasury notes, instruments of debt issued by the Government, have to be paid not only principal but interest. But to suggest that we are currently paying an effective rate of somewhere between 5 or 6 or 6.5, or thereabout—the fact is that interest rates could rise as they have in the past, which would have a disastrous effect on the economic vitality of this Nation.

So, if we look at the accumulated debt that we are carrying, the \$4.9 trillion, recognizing that each year we spend more than we generate in revenues, and add to that, we are faced with the reality that within a relatively short period of time we are going to have to increase that the debt ceiling. We are going to have to increase that authorization somewhere, we are told, of up to \$5.3, or \$5.4, or \$5.5, or \$5.6 trillion for a term of perhaps 18 months, and then we are going to have to do it again.

So my point is we are continuing to increase the indebtedness of this Nation. I am told that for a person being born today, his or her share of the debt is somewhere in the area of \$150,000, to \$175,000. That is going to increase unless we do something drastic and turn it around.

We have been talking for a long time about a balanced budget. Everybody, including the White House, supports a balanced budget, a mandatory balanced budget, a process that will get us there. And we have talked about a 7-year ascension. We have had, I think, five proposals from the administration. The first one did not get one vote in the U.S. Senate. The last one really makes the lion's share of the cuts in the sixth and seventh years. That is pretty hard to accept because we know that Congress is not going to have the self-discipline in 6 or 7 years to make those draconian cuts. We know that President Clinton, even if he were to be re-elected is not going to be in office in 2001 and 2002 when reality will hit.

So we are going into this period of debate on increasing the debt from \$4.9 trillion at a time when we are adding \$165 billion in deficits each year, and we do not have a way out. When I say "a way out," we do not have a commitment to a real balanced budget in 7 years because the last proposal by the White House was not real. The press and the public do not seem to accept that it was not real in terms of all the cuts in the sixth or seventh year as opposed to proportional reductions in each of the 7 years.

It is like taking medicine, Mr. President. You have to take it anyway. If you take it up front and get it over with through the process, why, hopefully, you can reach a cure. If you have to take it when you get too sick, sometimes it might not cure you.

Furthermore, I think it is fair to say that during the extended debate to try to reach a balanced budget, the Republicans were blamed for shutting down