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Senate

The Senate met at 9 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:

Gracious Father, our hearts are filled with gratitude. We are thankful that You have chosen to be our God and have chosen us to know You. Your love embraces us and gives us security; Your joy uplifts us and gives us resiliency; Your peace floods our hearts and gives us serenity; Your Spirit fills us and gives us strength.

We truly believe that Your loving hand is upon our lives; help us to be sensitive to every guiding nudge of direction. Keep us from making up our minds and then asking for Your approval. Keep us from acting as if we have Your answers to all questions. Keep us humble in our search for our applications of Your truth to the matters that face us. Free us from condemnatory judgments, and save us from the exhaustion and frustration of rushing up self-chosen paths without Your guidance.

Give us insight to see Your path for our lives, and the patience and endurance to walk in it with our hands firmly in Yours. Through our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader, Senator WARNER of Virginia, is recognized.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer, the President pro tempore of the Senate. I join with many others in recognizing how our distinguished senior Senator from South Carolina is always there present to open the U.S. Senate. That, in and of itself, is a record that merits the attention of all.

SCHEDULE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10 o'clock. At 10 a.m., under rule XXII, a live quorum will begin. Once a quorum is established, the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the modified committee amendment to S. 1173, the highway legislation. Following that vote, the Senate will begin approximately 90 minutes of debate on the Interior appropriations conference report. If all of that time is used, Members can anticipate a second vote at approximately 12:15.

Under the previous order, at 12:30, the Senate will recess for the weekly policy luncheons to meet. Hopefully, when the Senate reconvenes at 2:15, the Senate will begin consideration of either the Amtrak legislation dealing with the pending strike, or Amtrak reform which would address the strike.

In addition, the Senate may begin debate on Senator COVERDELL's education IRA legislation, H.R. 2646. Therefore, Members can anticipate rollcall votes throughout today's session of the Senate.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to extend beyond the hour of 10 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

The Senator from Virginia is recognized to speak for up to 5 minutes.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Chair.

THE NEED TO ADDRESS THE HIGHWAY BILL

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, my remarks this morning go to the need for this body to begin to address the substantive provisions of the highway bill, S. 1173. As the Senate full knows, I am

privileged to be the chairman of the subcommittee which, over the course of a period of the year, developed this piece of legislation. Many Senators have traveled great distances. We had hearings in several places throughout the United States and a number of hearings here, of course, in our committee room. But a lot of hard work went into this bill.

Now, the question on cloture involves the Senate consideration of the campaign finance bill. I leave to the respective leaders who, as nearly as I can determine, are trying to work diligently to resolve the procedural conflict involving that piece of legislation, campaign finance reform, as it relates to this bill. But as I read through the order that was prepared by the leader's office this morning reciting other pieces of legislation to which this body will turn, the question, of course, rises, why can't we go ahead with the ISTEA bill?

Again, I leave that to the leaders. They have worked on this diligently and indeed there are developments every hour on the hour. So it is difficult for any of us not involved in the negotiations to explain the exact reasons.

But the reason I asked to take the floor this morning is that we are witnessing here in this country, in the past week, and particularly yesterday, a very precipitous decline in our stock market, commodity markets, and the like. It clearly manifests an instability.

As I look at this piece of legislation, this is an absolute building block of stability for America's economy. This bill has literally millions and millions of jobs related to it. Now, highways, bridges, and other infrastructure requirements take months to plan—engineering, financial, consideration by the respective legislative bodies and highway commissions of the several States. It is a process which was carefully crafted in the 1991 bill over a period of

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



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6 years. The reason we put in a 6-year bill was to provide the type of stability that enables those from the Governor and State legislatures to the various highway boards and commissions to do that type of planning.

All across this country today, in the wake of the instability of the marketplace and other economic indicators, millions and millions of men and women are dependent for their livelihood on this program going forward in an orderly way. Highways can't be built overnight. Weather has a very definite impact on the ability of the hands of these laboring people to build these highway systems. In some States, that envelope of weather is a matter of several months, primarily because of the weather conditions. But indeed during the course of the intense heat of summer, again, there are restrictive periods in which roads and highways can be built. It is for that reason that I ask this morning that we cannot be oblivious to what is taking place in the marketplace of our country and all over the world, this instability, at a time when this bill will be a very steady building block to add stability.

This vote will be the fourth to invoke cloture so that the Senate can proceed to the consideration of this legislation to reauthorize our Nation's surface transportation programs. This is needed because of the intent regarding campaign financing.

Mr. President, the funding level is \$145 billion. Stop and think about that—\$145 billion. That would benefit every single State. We have tried in this bill to equitably and fairly distribute these funds that would go from the State in the form of gasoline taxes, petroleum taxes associated with trucks, and diesel, and so forth—up to the highway trust fund and revolve and come back. We have tried to equitably distribute these funds, more so than in the 1991 ISTEA. The funding level in ISTEA II, which is the present bill, is \$145 billion. It is a 20-percent increase in funding over the 1991 ISTEA I.

This funding level, if I may say, is significantly higher than recommended by the administration in their proposal that came to the Congress. The United States has the largest transportation system in the world, with 170,000 miles of National Highway System routes, 900,000 miles of other Federal aid roads, and 3.7 million miles of other public roads. Our national network of highways carries 136 million cars, 58 million light trucks, 6.9 million freight trucks, and 686,000 buses. In 1995, cars and light trucks, mostly personal vehicles, were driven 2.2 trillion miles.

What is alarming to learn, however, is that nearly half of our major road system is in mediocre or fair condition. I will repeat that. Half of this vast communications system is in mediocre or fair condition. This lack of investment clearly jeopardizes safety, the individual personal safety of those on the highways, and the mobility of the trav-

eling public, as well as our economic competitiveness.

Now, I don't presume to give the causes for this problem in the market today, but anybody who wishes to be informed can certainly listen carefully, as I have done in the last 24 hours, to others who presumably have a better knowledge. But this problem is precipitated less by the U.S. economy, if at all—because that economy is relatively healthy—but more by the world marketplace, and primarily in Asia. It is a one-world competitive market, and the ability of this Nation to compete in that market is very, very significantly dependent on the efficiencies, the safety of this infrastructure of highways and roads and bridges. Mr. President, again, it is the competition in the world financial markets, primarily the deterioration of the situation in Asia that is causing the precipitous decline in our markets. I subscribe that that same competition exists in every other walk of life relative to the ability of the American working men and women to compete with their hands and their minds with others throughout the world. It is a one-world market.

I remember so well visiting, in Luray, VA, a plant that manufactures blue jeans. Now, blue jeans are almost a language in the world over today in many respects. I saw Virginians down over their machines sewing the particular garments being made that day.

I turned to the plant manager, who was escorting me through and I said, "How can we compete with the blue jeans manufacturers elsewhere in the world?" It was very interesting. I said, "We are complying with all the environmental requirements, with the wage laws, the workers are well paid, well cared for, with health programs; how can we compete with those plants that are operating while we are sleeping in the Asian market?"

He said, "Come with me."

We walked down and I saw a bank of computers that take the orders in, relay the orders to the workbench, products are manufactured, put on a conveyor belt, and then he beckoned me and we went outside. There were a half-dozen semi-trailers being loaded, box after box. He said to me very simply, "That order came in this morning, that garment was manufactured to the specifications of the merchant that placed that order, and the finished product is put in that truck and that truck travels overnight and that pair of jeans is on the store shelf the following morning."

Asia cannot compete because of the infrastructure of transportation, the ability of this plant and other plants all over America to, within 24 hours, turn around an order and have that product on the shelf.

That is what is at stake, the ability to turn around these products in the face of a deteriorating infrastructure all across this country.

Mediocre and fair condition. That is half of the Nation's road system. That

extrapolates into jobs, millions and millions of men and women of the United States ready to go to work provided in this bill and provide the needed stability that we are lacking today in view of these tragic declines in the world markets.

Transportation provides the link between business, industries, and consumers. Transportation and related industries employ 9.9 million people in the United States, slightly more than 7 percent of the total work force in this Nation. According to the Department of Transportation, for every \$1 billion invested in highway and bridge projects, over 42,000 new jobs are created. As one of the largest sectors of our economy, transportation represents nearly 11 percent of the gross domestic product. It is just behind the basic services of housing, health care, and food.

Another compelling statistic confirms that transportation remains a sound investment for the American taxpayers. For every dollar spent, there is an economic return of \$2.60.

Mr. President, I therefore urge my colleagues to consider these facts and let us not bring upon this institution that old adage that while Rome burned, Nero fiddled. We have to come to grips with this procedural question on campaign finance reform, but this type of legislation must go forward to provide the economic stability that is necessary at this very hour in America.

So I close, Mr. President, by urging all Senators who will be coming to the floor very shortly to express their views to perhaps take a look at what is happening in the international financial markets. It is impacting this country. Take a look at what is happening because while campaign finance is an important issue, it could really be perceived in the workplace by those who carry the lunch buckets, those who bend and sweat and toil to build America's roads and bridges, as the ant that toppled the mountain of jobs that are involved in this bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and 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. BINGAMAN. 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. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL TESTING

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes this morning to debunk a few myths that are being spread about how the Senate voluntary national testing plan would