

body—is the Senator from West Virginia, who we are honoring today with this resolution.

Mr. President, I had the good fortune to be a member of a delegation that met in West Virginia with British Parliamentarians. We had the ministers from Great Britain. We had other leaders. We met in West Virginia. After having been there, I understand some of the songs that come out of West Virginia, such as, "The West Virginia hills where I was born, and all is beautiful there."

What I am about to tell the Senate, and even though I was there, I find hard to believe. We had some entertainment, some music—blue-grass music. It was exciting. They asked Senator BYRD, "Tell us a song you would like to hear." And he said, "There are more pretty girls than one." They played that song. It was a great song. I have heard it many times since.

Then he handed out notebooks to the Members of the Senate and to the Parliamentarians. From memory, without a note, he proceeded to recite the reign of the British monarchs, the date they served office, their names, and what they did. That took about 40 minutes or so for him to do, or maybe an hour. The British Parliamentarians were flabbergasted. They had never heard anything like this in their lives. But, as happens in this body, there are many times that we hear things that we have not heard any time in our lives, except from the Senator from West Virginia.

I could tell you about the remarks he made on the Senate floor about the Roman Empire, about which a course at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas is now being taught, using the text of his lectures here on the Senate floor.

Mr. President, the people of West Virginia should know that whether he was leading the debate on the Panama Canal treaty, or other international or domestic matters, that his No. 1 priority has always been the people of West Virginia. It has been a great example for all of us: to be involved in international and national affairs, but to never lose sight of the fact that you are elected by the people from your State and that the people in your State should have first priority. That is the most important lesson I have learned from the Senator from West Virginia.

I express to the Senator, through the Presiding Officer, my affection, my admiration, and my respect, and I hope that, in some manner, my public service to the people of the State of Nevada will be as well-served as the Senator from West Virginia has served the people of West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, Plato thanked the gods for having been born a man, and he thanked them for the good fortune of having been born a

Greek. He thanked them for having permitted him to live in the age of Sophocles.

Mr. President, I am very thankful for many things. I am thankful for the respect of my colleagues. My colleagues upon more than one occasion—undoubtedly many of them—have been angered by things that I have said. I am sure they have been frustrated with me from time to time over the many years. But they have always been forgiving, understanding, and most considerate. And I thank them. I thank, of course, the Supreme Governor of the World for having let me live to serve for 50 years the people of West Virginia.

The psalmist tells us, "the days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." I thank God for his mercy and his kindness and his love, for having let me live to serve the people of West Virginia 50 years.

I thank the people of West Virginia for having demonstrated the faith and confidence in me to reelect me these many times over a period of a half century.

Queen Mary I of England lost the port of Calais to the French. Mary served from 1553 to 1558. She said, "When I am dead and opened, you will find 'Calais' written on my heart." I say to the people of West Virginia, "West Virginia" will always be indelibly engraved with blood upon my heart until it returns to the dust.

I must thank a very understanding and forgiving and considerate woman—my wife Erma—who has served with me these 50 years. I think that our spouses sacrifice beyond what people generally know when we serve in this body. Come next May 29, we will have been married 60 years. I had to have a forgiving and understanding and cooperative wife who was as dedicated to the people of West Virginia as I, to have done it.

Finally, Mr. President, let me thank my staff. I have always been blessed with a good staff. I was once told by the chief chaplain of General Patch's army in World War II that a true mark of genius is to be able to surround oneself with able, committed people. I have had that kind of staff over these many years, a staff that likewise has overlooked my foibles, idiosyncrasies, and has been cooperative and kind and has helped me when I had to walk through the valley of despair—at my grandson's death. They, too, have served the people of West Virginia and the people of the Nation.

I apologize to the leaders for imposing on their valuable time. I know how it works. They have other things to do, other demands are made upon them and other business is there to take care of, other errands to run, and other services to perform, but always there is some straggling Senator who comes to the floor who wants to take some time and talk. But I thank them, and I hope

that over the years, whatever disappointments I bring upon them, I can have the opportunity to make amends and to support them in the good work that they do.

And so I thank all today for the privilege and the honor that have been bestowed upon me by the Senators on both sides of the aisle. I have also been very fortunate in having had two good colleagues in these 38 years. I had Senator Randolph to begin with and now I have Senator ROCKEFELLER, who is a very fine colleague. I could not ask for a better colleague than either of them. Senator ROCKEFELLER has been especially supportive and deferential and kind to me. And so I have many things, Mr. President, for which to be grateful.

HARRY REID has impressed me in the years he has been in the Senate. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, many times I have asked him to chair subcommittee hearings when I could not be there to do so, and he has always done an excellent job.

He, too, is a Senate man. He is dedicated to the institution. I have had many conversations with him. I feel highly privileged to have him as my friend.

Tennyson said, "I am a part of all that I have met." How rich I am in that I am a part of HARRY REID and JAY ROCKEFELLER and TOM DASCHLE and TRENT LOTT.

I thank both leaders again for their consideration in giving me this time. I yield the floor.

GRANTING FLOOR PRIVILEGES

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, did the Senator from South Dakota have a resolution he wanted to send to the desk concerning Senator CLELAND?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I do have a resolution, and I send it to desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 8) granting floor privileges.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the resolution is agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 8) reads as follows:

S. RES. 8

Resolved, That an employee in the office of Senator Max Cleland, to be designated from time to time by Senator Cleland, shall have the privilege of the Senate floor during any period when Senator Cleland is in the Senate chamber during the 105th Congress.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I believe we have completed now the customary list of resolutions and unanimous-consent requests. I do have a statement that I would like to make on this opening day, and then I believe the Senator from South Dakota might have some additional remarks he would want to include in the RECORD with regard to

Senator BYRD. Also, after I complete this statement, I will ask unanimous consent there be a period of morning business until 5 o'clock. But at this point I would like to make some opening remarks with regard to how we would like to proceed this year and some discussion about the legislative schedule.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, if I could apologize to the distinguished majority leader, I have a couple of Senators who have been waiting for me for about a half-hour and I need to get into the room. Out of respect for the Senator, I should stay and listen to his eloquence and his visionary comments about his plans for the 105th, and I apologize. I would like to come back and make a statement with regard to the opening day as well as Senator BYRD, and I will do so at a later time. But I apologize up front to the distinguished majority leader for my absence as he makes his remarks.

Mr. LOTT. I am sure he will read them in the RECORD, Mr. President, and will have some comment later.

LEGISLATIVE SCHEDULE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, it is customary on this opening day of Congress to lay out the highlights of the legislative schedule ahead of us and discuss whatever procedural problems or changes might be in the offing.

First of all, I am not going to give today a finite list, or a list that we will have on the agenda that we will try to complete before the Easter recess, but I will do that on the 21st. I do want to mention some of the bills that I think have a high priority that we will be taking up early on in this session.

It is no great secret that I would like to make the schedule of the Senate more predictable. I think that will help us all do a better job. One of the things that I could not understand when I first came to the Senate was the inability to make any kind of plans as to when we would begin; when would we end; could I get home for supper with my family; would I be able to go back to my State and be with my constituents. The uncertainty is killing in many respects, and so I am going to work very hard as majority leader this year to try to give some greater degree of predictability. I will not always be able to do it, but I will work with the minority leader as he leads the Democrats to try to make that information available as to when we will come in. We will try not to go late every night.

We will try not to go late every night. In fact, my hope is we will finish up at a very reasonable hour, hopefully 6 o'clock every week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. We may have to go late to some extent on Thursday. We will need to be in on some Fridays and some Mondays, but I will try my best, again cooperating with the Members of the other side of the aisle and their leadership, to make that information known to the Members as early as pos-

sible so they can make some plans as to when they can be with their families or be with their constituents.

As a first step in that effort, last month I provided the Democratic leader and to all the Members on the Republican side of the aisle and to the Democratic Members, a calendar outlining the recess periods for the first session of the 105th Congress. I strongly intend to follow that calendar. But, obviously, any Senator who tries to delay our session or cause us problems can mess up those good intentions. But, barring emergencies, there is no reason why the Senate should not be able to function with a high degree of predictability about the timetable. That will require cooperation from our colleagues all throughout the year, as we get ready to have the President's Day recess period, or as we go to the Easter period, or even later on in the year.

With that in mind, I want to mention, in a general way, several matters I hope the Senate will be able to consider prior to the scheduled Easter recess. It is not inclusive, and it may not be that we will be able to get to these issues. It will depend on conversations on both sides of the aisle, communication with the leadership on both sides, meetings with the chairmen, and it will also depend on the ability of committees to act. I will be more specific later on this month, as I indicated.

By early February, the President should have submitted to us a detailed budget for fiscal year 1998. How that will take shape—and what degree of cooperation might be involved there—remains to be seen. But, one way or the other, the Senate will have to consider a budget for the year ahead. I hope that we will come to an agreement on a balanced budget over a period of years. It will take a lot of effort, but a lot of progress, I believe, was made last year and the gap between the Congress and the President was closed perceptibly over those past months there, the last months of 1995 and early 1996. We ought to pick up where that ended and see if we cannot come to an agreement that would lead us to a balanced budget over a period of years. Needless to say, that budget is going to be one that will be negotiated between the parties in the House and the Senate, and with the President.

Toward the same goal the Senate should, I believe, in due course, consider, again, a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. I know there are those who do not agree with that here in the Senate and they will certainly have ample opportunity to be heard and make their case. But I have noticed that good intentions do not accomplish the job. Even a plan to get us to a balanced budget does not always get us there, and we have not had a balanced budget now in some, I guess, 28 years or so; 1969 was the last balanced budget. So it looks like it will have been 30 years that we will have gone as a Federal Government without a bal-

anced budget. I think the plan is not enough. I think that the constitutional amendment will add a great deal of weight to that desire and, in fact, require us to have a balanced budget.

The Senate will, also in due course, consider the numerous nominations in the executive branch as the President restructures his administration for a second term. It is my intention to deal with those nominations expeditiously and fairly. I think the President is entitled to make his selections for Cabinet Secretaries and other administration positions and expect them to be considered early and in a fair manner by the Senate. We will do that. As I indicated earlier, we will begin hearings, either this week or certainly next week, and we hope to begin to have votes on those the week of January the 20th and 21st, right after the inauguration. Some of them may have some difficulty, may take more time, but, we are going to move forward as rapidly as we can.

On both sides of the aisle there is considerable interest in taking up some of the reauthorizations that come due this year. These should not be diminished. They are very important. Certainly one of those is the ISTEA or Inter-service Transportation Efficiency Act; that is the highway bill. This legislation is as complicated as it is important. It will not be partisan. It will not be regional. It will not even be philosophical. It will vary from State to State. Sometimes you have States right next to each other that have different views on how those funds should be distributed between highways or mass transit, and what the formula would be for distribution between the States. I think a lot of work needs to be done, but it is very important. Transportation and infrastructure in America is essential to our economic growth and development, and the free movement of Americans all over this country. I hope we can get this done, out of committee and on the floor of the Senate and completed by the Easter recess. It will take an extraordinary degree of cooperation and consensus, but the only way you get that done is to get started.

Also, in the same area of transportation, there are a number of other proposals we need to consider such as the problems that we are finding with airbags in passenger vehicles. Parents throughout America now are concerned about the safety of their children in their cars. How do we go as long as we have without realizing the danger that they impose? Now it seems like every week we hear of another incident where some child was injured as a result of the airbag. There are, I presume, some solutions. But we need to think about that and work on it.

We should also address the crisis in American education. I am a product of what I think was a good public education system in America. My mother was a schoolteacher for 11 years. I worked for the University of Mississippi for 3 years, in their placement