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Senate

(Legislative day of Friday, September 22, 2000)

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m., on the expiration of the recess, 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, help us to live beyond the meager resources of our adequacies and learn that You are totally reliable when we trust You completely. You constantly lead us into challenges and opportunities that are beyond our strength and experience. We know that in every circumstance, You provide us with exactly what we need.

Looking back over our lives, we know that we could not have made it without Your intervention and inspiration. And when we settle back on a comfortable plateau of satisfaction, suddenly You press us on to new levels of adventure and leadership. You are the disturber of false peace, the developer of dynamic character, and the ever present deliverer when we attempt what we could not do on our own.

May this be a day in which we attempt something beyond our human adequacy and discover that You are able to provide the power to pull it off. Give us a fresh burst of excitement for the duties of this day so that we will be able to serve courageously. Indeed, we will attempt great things for You and expect great things from You. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). The Senator from Alaska.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4578, the Interior appropriations bill. It is hoped that all debate and a vote on the conference report can be completed by midafternoon. Following the disposition of the Interior appropriations legislation, the Senate may begin consideration of any other conference report available for action or the continuing resolution which continues Government funding through October 14. I encourage those Senators with statements regarding the Interior appropriations conference report to come to the floor as soon as possible during today's session. I thank my colleagues for their cooperation.

I believe Senator SCHUMER has asked to be recognized upon the conclusion of

my remarks. I also believe Senator GORTON, who will be managing the Interior appropriations bill, is expected to come over and may ask to interrupt the presentation at that time.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if the Senator from Alaska will yield, it is my understanding the Senator from Alaska requires about 25 minutes to speak as in morning business.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I am not sure what my time is. I would like to be allotted enough time to complete my presentation. I imagine it would be within that general timeframe. I will try to get to the point because I know there are other Members who want to be heard this morning.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are going to the Interior appropriations bill. I ask unanimous consent that whatever time is consumed by the Senator from Alaska, we be allowed the same amount of time to speak as in morning business on this side, with the Senator from New York requiring 15 minutes, and I would reserve whatever time is remaining to keep up with the time the Senator from Alaska uses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, what is the allotted time for morning business today?

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Michael F. DiMario, *Public Printer*

• 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. There is no allotted time.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I gather that the minority whip would like equal time.

Mr. REID. Yes.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I have no objection.

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

THE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE AND ENERGY POLICY

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, like millions of Americans last night, I watched the Presidential debate with a great deal of interest. It was one of the more memorable debates in recent history for a number of reasons.

First, of course, as a Republican, I was very proud of the job that Governor Bush did. It is probably fair to say that he was matched against a very experienced debater, Vice President GORE, but I think the Governor held his own in many respects. From the broad issues of prescription drugs to Medicare, education to energy, Governor Bush very clearly laid out what the choice is for the American people in this election.

Governor Bush engaged the issues. They were not dodged. The Governor was clear in laying out the goals and objectives he would propose in his administration, if he were elected President.

I was particularly pleased with the debate because it focused on energy, which is one of the crucial issues facing the American people today and has probably received the least publicity. Obviously, in the areas of education, prescription drugs, health, and Social Security, we are all trying to build a better structure, a long lasting structure, and also address what to do with the surplus.

But the issue on energy is quite clear. We have a crisis in this country. It has developed over a period of the last 7½ years. It has not been addressed by the current administration. I am very pleased that we have, in the energy area, a distinct separation on the issues between the candidates, and the American public can clearly understand and, as a consequence, view the merits of each proposal.

The Vice President said, in regard to a question on energy policy, and I quote:

I am for doing something on the supply side and the consumption side.

I have no doubt that that is the case, but I point out in the past 8 years we haven't had any indication of specifically what the Vice President would do on these issues. As a consequence, I think he is headed in the wrong direction, and the American public are becoming more and more aware.

What we have seen happen is the emergence of an issue that in many respects our friends on the other side of the aisle hope will go away or not become a major issue prior to the election. With the increasing rise in crude

oil—10 days ago it was up to an all-time high in 10 years of \$37; it dropped down with the SPR release; now it is coming up again—the American public is becoming aware of how crucial not our dependence on imported oil necessarily is but the general concern that we have sacrificed our traditional areas of dependence on energy, whether it be coal, nuclear, or hydro, for a policy that has been fostered by this administration that directs everything towards utilization of natural gas.

As a consequence, we have seen the price of natural gas rise from \$2.16 per thousand cubic feet 10 months ago to better than \$5.00 in the last quotes that have come out within the last couple weeks. We have seen a tremendous increase in the dependence on natural gas at the expense of all our other energy sources.

This has occurred over an 8-year period of time. During that time, Clinton-Gore have to stand accountable for what they have done. On the supply side, the Vice President has done something. It is a situation that the supplies have decreased 18 percent and on the consumption side, consumption has increased 14 percent. In spite of our efforts for conservation, in spite of our efforts in alternative energy, we have a decreased supply and an increased consumption.

I was astonished when the Vice President said in his response to a question on energy policy, and again I quote:

We need to get serious about this energy crisis in the Congress and in the White House.

Where has he been for the last 7½ years? While I don't agree with him in terms of Congress not being serious, I was glad to see they finally admitted it was not an issue taken seriously in the White House for the past 7½ years. That was certainly the implication.

We have had statements from our Secretary of Energy relative to the fact that the administration was caught napping with regard to energy prices, as we have seen the price of oil go from \$10 a barrel a year ago to \$37 within the last few weeks.

Now, I think, while it didn't come up in the debate last night specifically, there was a generalization to blame big oil. Well, who is big oil, Mr. President? Who sets the price of oil? We had a hearing before the Energy and Natural Resource Committee, which I chair. It was rather interesting because the Secretary of Energy did acknowledge that it is OPEC, the supplier, setting the price of oil. We are 58-percent dependent on OPEC. Who is OPEC? The Middle-east countries that have the excess capacity, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and moving down to Central America is Venezuela, and then we also have Mexico. They have the supply; we have the appetite. They set the price. So to blame big oil for profiteering, or to make the implication of profiteering, is totally unrealistic and a bit irresponsible, in my opinion. There is no mention, of course, in general terms of

the assumption that perhaps our oil industry was simply benevolent when they were selling at \$10 a barrel a little more than a year ago. They are not so benevolent now because, obviously, they don't set the price. It is a supply and demand issue.

When the Vice President said we needed to get serious about the energy crisis, I think it is apparent that there has been a lack of attention during this in the administration, because Congress has acted. Specifically, Congress passed legislation granting deep water royalty relief. Congress passed legislation to help our domestic oil and gas industry through tax incentives, which they vetoed. Congress passed legislation that would handle the country's nuclear waste, which they vetoed. Congress passed legislation to open up the Coastal Plain of ANWR—that sliver in the Arctic—to responsible development, which they vetoed. That was 6 years ago. Had they passed that legislation, we would know what is there. We could have another strategic petroleum reserve, and we don't know that. We would be a long way into the development stages if indeed the oil were there. I venture to say, Mr. President, if we made a commitment to proceed with the Arctic oil reserve, you would see a dramatic drop in the price of oil.

One of the other interesting things the Vice President brought up was the implication that we hadn't done anything, or not enough, with renewables. In the last 5 years under the Republican Congress, expenditures for renewables have been \$1.5 billion in new spending and \$4.5 billion in various tax incentives. So Congress ante up about \$4.6 billion total for that purpose. The difficulty is that we simply don't have the technology to replace our oil dependence with coal, natural gas, and hydrogen.

Let's not be fooled. It is not just around the corner. The Vice President said last night he is a big clean coal fan. Well, what does that really mean? You would assume he would support the development of coal-fired generating plants in this country. There hasn't been a new one built in years. The administration's budget over the last 5 years has proposed to rescind or defer more than \$1.4 billion in clean coal technology. Those are the facts.

How can you be all things to all people? Well, Vice President GORE implies he is pretty good at that. Let's talk a little bit about the facts because part of the issue that came up on energy was the disposition of the Coastal Plain in Alaska, the State I represent. I know something about it. I have been to the coastal plain many, many times. I think once again we saw the Vice President in trouble with the facts. This is what he said regarding the Arctic Coastal Plain, and I quote:

I think that is the wrong choice. It would only give us a few months' worth of oil, and oil would not start flowing for years into the future.

Well, the facts are, according to the Department of Energy—the Clinton-