

that we know America truly is in a recession. We have known that for some time, but it is now officially proclaimed.

Not in any way to lessen the importance of a debate over election reform, and that is important, I cannot yet quite understand how we get all of this done in time to get out for Christmas.

Before the Thanksgiving recess, I had offered Senator BOXER of California an opportunity to join with me—she from the Democratic side, I from the Republican side—to organize Christmas caroling for the Senate so we could join together in unity, as we have for the last several weeks, and sing Christmas carols on the eve of Christmas.

I suggest if we are going to do election reform, if we are going to do a stimulus package, if we are going to do a farm bill, and I add an energy bill because I think right now energy is every bit as important to the American consumer as election reform is to the American voter, and let us see what else is on that schedule—oh, yes, I forgot, railroad retirement reform—then it is going to be a merry little Christmas in Washington for all Senators who cannot make it out the night before to their home States. My State is about 2,500 miles further away than the Senator from Connecticut. So I say to Senator DODD, have yourself a very merry little Christmas.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate at 4:48 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 5:30 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. REID).

THE SENATE SCHEDULE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, we have just completed our caucus. I know the Republicans were caucusing. I am not sure whether they have completed or not. I want to report to the Senate about our current circumstances and what the schedule might be for the remainder of the week.

Senator LOTT and I have been discussing the current schedule and our circumstances involving the railroad retirement bill. My hope is that we can move to proceed to the bill sometime within the next hour. If that is the case, it is my intention to file cloture on the bill at some point this evening.

It is also my intention that we seek unanimous consent to vote on cloture on Monday. We will not be in session on Saturday, but we will be on Monday. We will also entertain amendments. It is my understanding that Senator LOTT may be recognized to offer an amendment, and we will have a debate on that amendment tomorrow and on Monday.

My expectation is that there will not be any votes tonight or tomorrow but that we will have votes on Monday at approximately 5 o'clock.

Senator MURRAY reports to me that the Transportation conference report has now been completed, and it is my hope that we can vote on the Transportation conference report perhaps as early as Monday. If not Monday, then on Tuesday. My hope is that if we can achieve cloture on the railroad retirement bill on Monday, we can bring debate on the bill to a close by Wednesday.

It is then my intention, as I have said on several occasions, to make a motion to proceed to the farm bill. That is a must-pass piece of legislation. It is my hope and expectation that we can complete our work on that, maybe even as early as the end of next week.

I also note that we have made the decision over the course of the last few hours, and in consultation with Senator LOTT as well as our caucus, that we will be in session and voting the week of December 10. That has been an open question until now. But we have now made that decision. Our expectation is we will be voting every day the week after next. Senators ought to be on hand and prepared to vote all week. Of course, it may be that we will have to vote and be in session the week after that. But clearly, for the next 2 weeks the Senate will be in session and Senators need to be prepared to be on the floor and voting, to accommodate the remaining schedule we have for the remainder of this session of Congress.

I also presented to the caucus what amounts to an informal agreement on how we will proceed on the economic stimulus bill. I am pleased to report that our caucus has agreed with the proposal that has been presented to me by the Speaker, as we consider how to proceed on the economic stimulus bill. If we can reach a procedural agreement tonight, it is my expectation we can move to substantive negotiations on the economic stimulus bill tomorrow morning. It is my hope we can work on it through the weekend, if that is possible, in order to try to expedite our work on that bill and our efforts to reach some final agreement early next week.

The procedural agreement would call for consideration of the Senate Finance Committee bill, the House-passed economic stimulus bill, and other issues relating to those two bills. We do not exclusively limit our consideration of economic stimulus to those two vehicles. There are a lot of other issues out there.

Senator DURBIN in particular has expressed to the caucus on numerous occasions, and here on the floor, how important it is that we consider a payroll tax holiday. That is an issue I have indicated I am particularly interested in and intrigued with. I don't know whether or not we have the ability to work it into the agreement. I know

Senator DOMENICI has expressed an interest in the proposal, and Senator LOTT has noted his support for the proposal.

On our side, I don't think there has been any more ardent a supporter, any more articulate an advocate of the so-called payroll tax holiday than the distinguished senior Senator from Illinois. I applaud him and appreciate his tutorial to the caucus on the issue. He has been able to bring us to a better understanding of how it would work. I must say I am indebted to him for all of his work in advocating that particular issue.

But my point is that that, along with other vehicles, is going to be considered as we debate the issue in the hope that we can bring some resolution to our negotiations sometime early next week.

I see the Senator standing. I am happy to yield to him.

(Ms. STABENOW assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the leader for his kind remarks.

I hope that in the course of this economic recovery or economic stimulus package we can still stick to our principles that what we do will help the economy, help the right people in the economy, and not do any long-term damage to the economy.

I think this proposed Federal payroll tax holiday, month-long holiday, meets the criteria. Frankly, it will go to workers across America who draw a paycheck. They will see it on payday. It will come as quickly as we can pass the bill and enact it into law. That is money that families can use for important purchases at the end of the year. It is money that will go right into the economy and spark some growth and some activity that we really do need. It is also money that is going to go to workers, to those making incomes up to \$80,000—\$80,400 is the limit on the Federal payroll tax. So that really gives it to working families.

In addition, it is focused to help small businesses because I think forgiving this tax for employers will say to small businesses, we are going to help you meet some of your expenses, whether they are health insurance premiums or security needs, for your business after September 11.

I have spoken to Senator DOMENICI. I thank my friend and the majority leader for his reference. I hope in the course of this conference, putting together the stimulus and recovery package, that this can be included.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the Senator from Illinois. His comments make my point. He is not only knowledgeable and articulate on the issue, but he has certainly persisted in ensuring that this piece of legislation be considered along with many others.

Madam President, there are several key areas the Democratic caucus—and it goes to the point raised by the Senator from Illinois—will be advocating.

First and foremost, I want to emphasize again because I feel the need every

time we talk about economic stimulus to ensure that people understand our real priority. Our priority, first and foremost, is to help the 7.5, now almost 8 million workers who are unemployed.

In the last recession, we extended employment benefits four times. We have to consider the fact that those weeks are running out now, for those who are eligible for unemployment assistance, and we have to extend it again this time.

But we also have to understand that 54 percent of those who are unemployed today are not entitled to unemployment benefits, so we have to broaden eligibility. That is certainly going to be a key area for us as we attempt to negotiate some successful solution.

I would say as well that none of them can afford health benefits.

When you are given a few hundred dollars a month in unemployment, it is almost impossible—after you have paid the rent, after you have paid for the groceries and the heating bills and other necessities of the family—to buy health insurance. We have to assist these unemployed workers to pay for their health care during the time they are unemployed as well. That would be a priority for us.

We also will try to ensure that the issue of rebates is addressed for those who pay a lot of payroll tax but were not entitled to an income-tax rebate last year. That ought to be on the table, and we will be talking about that.

Business tax relief is also something we care a lot about. The expensing for small business is something for which we are going to fight.

We are also going to try to assure additional depreciation for all businesses. The high-tech community said that is one of the most important issues for them. That will be a priority for us.

We have a number of very key issues we hope to present to our House colleagues. But I also remind all of my colleagues that whatever we do on the finance side—whatever we do on the revenue side—is only half of our interest. There is an economic stimulus involved here. It is our interest to pass homeland security as well—Senator BYRD and I have been meeting all day long—as we consider the Byrd amendment to ensure that homeland security is part of economic stimulus as we take up the Defense appropriations bill early next week.

Just as soon as that bill comes over to the Senate, we will take it up in committee. Senator BYRD will be offering his amendment on homeland security. It is my hope we can get a bipartisan vote on that as well.

Nothing will stimulate this economy faster than raising people's confidence about their own security. Nothing will help them more in that regard than if we increase law enforcement assistance and provide ways in which to ensure, on bioterrorism and all the other potential possibilities for attacks to our national security, we are more prepared than we are today.

That, too, is economic stimulus. That, too, is part of our plan. But that will be running on a separate track. I want to emphasize how critical we think that piece is, and how important it is to our long-term resolution. They have to go hand in glove. They are going to run in tandem. We are going to be taking both of these sequentially, and both are important to us.

I make that point, as we have made it before on the Senate floor.

I appreciate very much the interest of all Senators.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, will the majority leader yield for a question?

Mr. DASCHLE. Yes, I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would like to ask the majority leader if he would entertain a question. I would like to inquire further of the majority leader on this subject of the farm bill. I know it was the stated intent of the majority leader to attempt to offer a motion to proceed to the farm bill this week, perhaps midweek, late in the week, yesterday, or today. I know that was thwarted by the filibuster on the motion to proceed to the bill that the Senate was prepared to debate. The majority leader was unable to make the motion to proceed to the farm bill. The filibuster we have had and cloture vote that was required now puts us into next week.

The majority leader indicated it is still his intention to file a cloture motion to proceed following the disposition of the bill that is on the floor.

Is that correct?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the Senator is absolutely correct. I have noted on several occasions my intention to move to the farm bill just as soon as we complete our work on the railroad retirement bill. It can be next Monday or Tuesday. It can be whenever we finish. But we will move to that bill next. We have to move to it.

These are must-pass pieces of legislation that have to be done. We can take them in any order. But it is my intention to follow through with the order that I have already announced, which is to complete our work on the farm bill next.

We will have the Defense appropriations bill, the stimulus bill, and the terrorist insurance bill. All of those have to be addressed.

But as I noted—I see the chairman of the Agriculture Committee in the Chamber—the farm bill will be the next bill after the railroad retirement bill.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield for just another moment, that is a reassuring answer. I know how strongly the majority leader feels about the need to write a farm bill.

I observe that the House of Representatives has passed a farm bill. We have now passed one out of the committee under the leadership of Senator HARKIN. We need to get it to the floor of the Senate and then to conference.

The goal here is to get a bill on the President's desk for signature. This is

about family farmers hanging on by their financial fingertips and struggling to survive. It is our obligation to get this done.

I know it is not the fault of the majority leader. It was his full intention to bring that to the floor. It would have been on the floor today had we not faced the filibuster.

I wanted to, once again, ask. And I received the answer that I expected I would. The majority leader is a strong advocate of family farms and the need for a better farm program. I am deeply reassured by that answer. I look forward to being here with the majority leader and with the chairman of the Agriculture Committee fighting hard for a farm bill that will give family farmers in this country a decent chance to survive.

I thank the majority leader for his answers.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the Senator from North Dakota and I have been through a lot of legislative battles over the years on rural issues. As he has noted, nothing is more important to rural America than passage of this bill to allow us to go to conference first and to allow us to resolve the outstanding issues that remain between the House and the Senate membership on farm policy so we can get the bill to the President in time to provide all the assurance and confidence we can to farmers and ranchers all over this country. We understand their economic plight.

I note, as the Senator from North Dakota has on several occasions, that last month—the month of October—we saw the single biggest 1-month depression in prices that we have seen in all the time the Department of Agriculture has been keeping records. We have never seen the prices plummet as dramatically in 1 month as we saw them plummet last month.

If there is no other reason to move forward on farm legislation than that, it would be enough.

I am hopeful that people understand the urgency of the issue—the urgency of the issue of completing our work on the bill in time to go to conference, resolve our differences, and enact it into the law.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. DASCHLE. I am happy to yield.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I congratulate the majority leader for defining our schedule. It makes our lives more definite. I think we have the schedule outlined. As I heard the majority leader say, we are going to be in session starting Monday with votes, perhaps over the next weekend, and the next weekend until we finish.

Regarding the Agriculture bill—the farm bill—I think the Senator from Iowa has done an outstanding job not only in the product that came out of the committee but his willingness to take on issues that are so important. Everybody in America is affected by this farm bill. The conservation provisions in this bill are the best we have ever had, and they are getting better.

I think this farm bill is so important because of the problems the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Iowa have. The farm bill is so important. This bill affects the whole country. It is not just a farm bill.

I also say to the majority leader that I was given a statement by Senators as I walked into this Chamber indicating that Alamo and National car rental companies have filed for bankruptcy. This is really astounding. These two large rental car companies filed for bankruptcy.

I have had a number of conversations and meetings with the distinguished majority leader about companies and individuals who depend on tourism. For 30 States in the United States, their No. 1, No. 2, or No. 3 most important economic force is tourism.

I know the majority leader has stated publicly—and I appreciate it very much—that one of the items we are going to be looking at in an economic stimulus package is how the tourism industry can be helped. It is in such desperate shape—helping rental car companies and other entities that so depend on tourism.

I am very happy that there has been a framework developed. We can move forward. This is not inventing the wheel. In fact, we have done this before on very important issues since September 11. It will go down in history as remarkably good legislation. We have done it on four occasions. We did it with the appropriations for New York City, plus the \$20 billion for added defense for the country. We did it with airport security and antiterrorism. There is one other that I can't remember.

That sets the framework for doing some good work on the stimulus package.

I hope the leader will do something about this. I believe we will be very successful in working it out.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished assistant Democratic leader for his comments. He is absolutely right. The tourism industry has been very hard hit. This is yet another indication of the difficult time they are having. I wasn't aware that these two companies declared bankruptcy. But it certainly illustrates yet another instance of just how difficult a time many of these companies are experiencing.

So I appreciate his comment and especially appreciate so much his sensitivity to the agricultural situation. He noted he does not have a lot of farmers, but he has been extremely supportive and understanding about the farm situation. I appreciate that very much.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. I say to the majority leader, we don't have a lot of farmers; we have a lot of people who eat the food.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

COMPREHENSIVE RETIREMENT SECURITY AND PENSION REFORM ACT OF 2001

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I move to proceed to the railroad retirement bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, if the Senator will yield, I believe we have no further requests for time on the motion to proceed. We are ready to vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. REID. I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 10) to provide for pension reform, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the pending substitute amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no pending substitute. There is no pending amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 2170

(Purpose: To modernize the financing of the railroad retirement system and to provide enhanced benefits to employees and beneficiaries.)

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I have an amendment at the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. DASCHLE], for Mr. HATCH, for himself and Mr. BAUCUS, proposes an amendment numbered 2170.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in the RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I now ask for the yeas and nays on the pending substitute amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2171 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2170

(Purpose: To enhance energy conservation, research and development, and to provide for security and diversity in the energy supply for the American people, and for other purposes)

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT), for himself, Mr. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. BROWNBACK, proposes an amendment numbered 2171 to amendment No. 2170.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in the RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the pending Lott amendment:

Trent Lott, Frank Murkowski, Robert Bennett, Phil Gramm, Sam Brownback, Don Nickles, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, Larry Craig, Jon Kyl, Chuck Grassley, Pete Domenici, Mitch McConnell, Judd Gregg, Conrad Burns, Craig Thomas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the Daschle for Hatch and Baucus substitute amendment