

PROGRAM

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, for the information of all Senators, on Monday, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 14, the Energy bill. The chairman and ranking member were able to work through a number of amendments today, and they will continue to consider amendments during Monday's session. On behalf of the leader, I encourage Members who want to offer amendments to do so as early as possible next week. Those Members should contact the bill managers for an orderly consideration of those amendments.

Under a previous agreement, at 5:20 p.m. on Monday, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Earl Yeakel, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Texas. The Senate will vote on the Yeakel nomination at 5:30 p.m., and that will be the first rollcall vote of the day. Members should anticipate additional votes in relation to Energy bill amendments or any other items that can be cleared for action. In addition, the Senate will consider the trade agreements with Chile and Singapore. If all debate has been completed on those bills, the votes would also occur during Monday's session of the Senate.

Next week is the final week prior to the August recess. Senators can, therefore, expect busy sessions with rollcall votes throughout each day, and Members should schedule themselves accordingly.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess under the previous order following the remarks of the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD, for up to 20 minutes, and the distinguished Senator from Alabama, Mr. SESSIONS, for up to 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. BYRD. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH, for his courtesy in arranging for me to speak briefly before the Senate goes out for the weekend.

THE "REAL BEVERLY HILLBILLIES" IS REAL GARBAGE

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, for more than a century now, national commentators of one type or another have stereotyped, mocked, and ridiculed the people of Appalachia.

They continued to do so even as the region and its people were savaged by Northeast industrialists, and as economic forces beyond their control resulted in massive gaps of poverty in the region. When I say "their control," I refer to its being beyond the control

of the people of Appalachia. The stereotyping of the Appalachian people as dim-witted, barefooted hillbillies who thrive on incest and moonshine allowed the Nation to laugh at and turn its back on the plight of a people who were being robbed of their land and its resources. It prompted the Nation to perceive and to dismiss Appalachians as the instigators rather the victims of their plight.

Television has certainly been a part of this Appalachian bashing. "Green Acres" featured farming mountain folks conversing with a talking pig. The "Dukes of Hazzard" featured stereotypical mountain folk jumping into and out of cars, without bothering to open doors, and a car horn that played Dixie.

Even "The Waltons,"—remember the Waltons?—a series with numerous morally uplifting episodes and storylines that promoted hard work, love of family, honesty, patriotism, and spirituality, can be faulted for its beautifully romanticized version of poverty. It portrayed poverty as a way of life that nurtures, rather than inhibits, that builds character rather than denies opportunity.

I have seen poverty. I am one of poverty's children. I have known poverty, and poverty has known me. I can tell you that poverty is beautiful only if you are not poor.

In this day and age of political correctness, Appalachians may be the last remaining ethnic group that it is still socially acceptable to scorn, demean, stereotype, and joke about. If Jay Leno told such cruel, bigoted, and slanderous ethnic humor about any number of minority groups that he does Appalachians, he would have more than the ratings of David Letterman about which to be concerned.

Incredibly, the Columbia Broadcasting System, CBS, is planning to air a new program, "The Real Beverly Hillbillies." For this program, the brainchild of the CEO Leslie Moonves, CBS plans to pluck a poor, rural family from the hills of Appalachia and plop them down in a mansion in Beverly Hills so the Nation can laugh at them as they try to adjust to big city life. I have read that CBS is already conducting so-called "hick-hunts" in which they are searching for the perfect stereotype Appalachian family to amuse a national audience.

The insensitivity and mean spiritedness of this plan has already aroused protests and criticisms from many segments of American society including Appalachian social action groups, labor unions, and various State and national legislators.

The United Mine Workers of America, the Steel Workers Union, and Communication Workers have all protested the network's intent to ridicule good people and make fun of their lifestyles. Forty-three Members of the House of Representatives objected to the proposed program, saying it would be "an insult to the millions of people living in Appalachia."

While I am outraged, I am even more curious about just what kind of brain power went into proposing this show. I cannot help but chuckle when I picture these highly paid, supposedly educated television corporate executives sitting around in a plush, ornate boardroom and thinking of such a stupid program. I am sure most of these fellows earn at least a six-figure income. Some of them probably went to Ivy League schools. And this is what they come up with?

It is not even original. It is a plagiarism of an old program, only going a step further and using real people rather than actors.

Highly paid, highly educated television executives sitting around in an ornate boardroom and thinking of low-grade garbage such as this. If this were my staff, I can tell you that I would be looking for some new staffers.

But these CBS executives think it will be funny for city folk to sit back and watch country bumpkins try to blend into the culture of the "beautiful people" of Rodeo Drive. Their anticipation is that Americans will tune in and watch and just howl and howl as they watch a poor family from Appalachia adjust to the glitz and glamour of Beverly Hills, to modern appliances, Gucci shoes, and Rolex watches. Boy, I can hardly hold back my laughter, being one of those people from Appalachia, being one of those country bumpkins.

One CBS executive remarked: "Imagine the episode where they have to interview maids." Boy, I am sure that episode will be a real knee slapper.

I have to ask, Is this the best they can do? Is this the best television has to offer? Unfortunately, it is.

Just when you think the television standards can get no lower, they do. Just when you start thinking these bottom feeders have cleansed the bottom and might try to move up the food chain, they find more garbage at the bottom to keep them there.

This is an Appalachian speaking to an Appalachian who sits in the chair today and presides over this great body with such dignity and aplomb.

Television has become more than the "vast wasteland" FCC chairman Newton Minnow labeled it 42 years ago, it has become a waste.

This is the industry that brings us "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," "Fear Factor," and "Jerry Springer."

Fox Network has featured those unforgettable, morally uplifting hits, "Temptation Island," "Joe Millionaire," and now the latest, "Mr. Personality," which features the show's hostess, the talented Monica Lewinsky.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNER.) If the distinguished leader would indulge the Presiding Officer to give the usual admonishment to those privileged to sit in the gallery of the Senate, they are not to enter into vocal expressions or disaffections.

Mr. BYRD. I congratulate the Chair on upholding the rules of the Senate.

Let them laugh. I am laughing, too.

If these executives are looking for new ideas for television reality shows, may I suggest a few. We could take highly paid, well-groomed television network executives and relocate them to the sticks, where they'd have to try to find a job with health care and pension benefits and enough pay to support a family, and adjust to everyday life in rural America. Now that would be funny! And, as the president of the UMWA, Cecil Roberts, has suggested, we could put them to work digging coal from a 30-inch seam in a non-union coal mine. That too would be funny!

I could suggest a program where Americans could watch television anchormen trying to get to work on time each day while driving on hilly, winding two-lane roads behind huge coal trucks going 5 miles an hour up steep hills. We would watch their frustration build and build and could take bets on when they would blow their tempers. We could watch them get their \$2,500 made-to-measure suits dirty as they are forced to change tires flattened by huge potholes created by those coal trucks. We could watch them pull their cars into garages and get the estimates for repairs to the damage those potholes have done. Then we could laugh hysterically as they present "fleecing of America" awards to Senators who try to get those highways improved.

Or we could watch nightly news programs featuring episodes of journalists embedded with a Marine battalion comprised of the sons and daughters of Bush administration officials as they are being shot at in Iraq and Afghanistan.

That, of course, would not be funny, but it would make an important point that war is a lot more glamorous and macho when it is someone else's kid you are sending into combat.

Television could be such a positive tool in our society and culture. It could be doing so much good. It could be a powerful instrument to bring out the best in us, rather than appeal to our meanest and darker sides. It could be a creative instrument in elevating the standards and values of the American people rather than lowering them. I strongly urge the executives at CBS to reconsider their plans for the "Real Beverly Hillbillies" in favor a program that is enlightening, educational, and beneficial.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I should not take advantage of my two friends because I have been included in the order. I was given 20 minutes. I yield the floor.

Mr. SESSIONS. If the Senator from West Virginia would like to make additional remarks, I would suggest that Senator MCCAIN had quick remarks he would like to make and I will be glad to have him go ahead of me.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCAIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 1461 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Alabama and I thank also the distinguished Senator from Arizona.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, in April of this year, Senator COCHRAN, as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, and I, as ranking member, recognized a looming shortfall in the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, disaster relief accounts. We urged the President to release monies that he was holding up and also that he request funds to shore up the looming shortfall. Following severe floods in 19 West Virginia counties, I wrote to the administration again, this time pointing out that the Disaster Relief account would likely be empty by the end of July. At the time that I wrote that letter, the disaster relief fund has a balance of \$181 million. The balance now, four weeks later, is a mere \$89 million, and is expected to be completely exhausted by August 8th.

On July 7th, the President finally sent up an emergency supplemental request. After months of delay, the administration requested the additional funds to assist recovery efforts in West Virginia and over 300 other areas in every State of the Nation that have been hit hard by severe rains, floods, and tornadoes. These funds will help citizens to get back on their feet. The communication from the White House requested fiscal year 2003 emergency supplemental appropriations in the amount of \$1.9 billion for the Department of Homeland Security, Agriculture, Interior, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA.

The principal item in this request was \$1.55 billion requested for the Department of Homeland Security for FEMA to provide support for "ongoing disaster efforts and to ensure the capacity to respond to future disasters and emergencies." In a communication from Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, dated July 24, 2003, the Department now estimates that it will exhaust existing funds by August 8th and that it has no authority to provide assistance in the absence of appropriations.

The supplemental request also included an amount of \$253 million for fighting wildfires. As some of my colleagues may recall, 42 major fires, which have consumed over 400,000 acres, are raging in 12 western States. Officials at the Forest Service have told the Appropriations Committee that their fire suppression budget is already \$420 million short of what they anticipate needing between now and the end of the fiscal year. Also included

in the Administration's request is \$50 million for unanticipated costs associated with the recovery and investigation of the Space Shuttle Columbia accident.

In order to expedite the processing of this supplemental, the distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator TED STEVENS, and I, as ranking member, worked together to assure the earliest availability of this emergency supplemental request by incorporating it into the fiscal year 2004 Legislative Branch appropriations bill. On July 9th, only 2 days after receiving the President's supplemental request, the Appropriations Committee ordered reported the Legislative Branch appropriations bill, which included the full amount for disaster relief, emergency firefighting, and emergency NASA needs sought by the President in his July 7th communication, as well as \$100 million for a shortfall in AmeriCorps, a program which we were told the administration supports. The AmeriCorps amendment was voted on separately on the Senate floor and the funding was sustained by an overwhelming 71 to 21 vote. Subsequently, the Legislative Branch appropriations bill, including the supplemental, was approved on July 11th by the full Senate by a vote of 85 to 7, and conferees were appointed.

So what is the situation? The administration was slow in sending up the emergency supplemental budget request. The Senate Appropriations Committee, under the leadership of Senator TED STEVENS, responded quickly, acting within 2 days of receiving the request. And, within 2 additional days, on July 11th, the measure was approved by the full Senate. We have been waiting for the other body ever since. It has been 2 weeks since we acted on this bill in the Senate. We are advised that the other body plans to depart for the August recess tonight.

What are we to do to cover the costs of recovering from disasters and fire emergencies for the remainder of the current fiscal year? FEMA has already stopped making payments to States for \$400 million of infrastructure repairs in the 300 communities with outstanding natural disasters. Communities have already been forced to put projects for repairing damage from past disasters on hold.

In addition, if the Disaster Relief Fund is depleted by the end of July, which is just around the corner, that leaves 2 full months with no means of providing assistance to communities that may be hit hard by hurricanes, tornadoes, and other disasters or emergencies occurring in August and September. The Forest Service budget request of \$253 million for fighting 42 major fires in 12 western States is needed now.

Furthermore, twenty thousand AmeriCorps volunteers will lose their positions if supplemental funding is not approved. AmeriCorps volunteers work in our schools teaching our children reading and math. They provide