

some way, in the waning days of this Congress to work this out. We are going to work very hard. We will do it with the support and consideration of the majority leader, or without it. We really believe this is necessary. We are sorry the majority leader has objected, but we understand the reasons.

Mr. LOTT. Let me say, Mr. President, I am sure we have not heard the last of this issue. As we get to the conclusion of the session, there will be other areas or bills where this issue will be presented and argued. I fully expect that to happen.

Mr. President, is there objection?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There was objection.

Mr. LOTT. We are back to the original objection to the motion and the reading be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY ACT OF 2000—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 552, S. 2557, regarding the increasing price of gasoline and decreasing America's dependency on foreign oil.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is debatable.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of routine morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

CONFERENCE ACTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senator DORGAN had indicated he had some questions he would like to ask. I have some tributes and routine business and also the closing script that we would like to go into. I thought maybe I would yield for some questions before we begin that.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator from Mississippi yielding to me. I wanted to propound a series of questions.

First of all, let me say that I respect the difficult job the majority leader has. As we come to the end of the 106th Congress and try to put all the pieces together and make them fit, and so on, it is a difficult job.

One specific piece of legislation that is very important to me—as are many others—is the Agriculture appropriations bill.

I come from a farm State. This is a critically important piece of legislation.

The House of Representatives passed an Agriculture appropriations bill on July 11. The Senate passed one on July 20. It is now September 22. I was appointed a conferee for this appropriations conference. I am on the subcommittee, and there has been no appropriations conference at all. We are toward the end of this legislative session, and I worry about the regular process.

Will we have an appropriations conference?

The reason I am asking this question is, as the majority leader knows, there are some very controversial things in this legislation. I understand there are, because the Senate by a majority vote said we want them. One of those controversial issues is a policy that says: Let us stop using food as a weapon. We want to abolish sanctions on food shipments all around the world. It is controversial.

Some don't want to do that. Some want to continue to use food sanctions against Cuba and other countries. I don't. Seventy Members of the Senate voted not to do it. We want to abolish that approach. That is one.

The other controversial issue is—Senator JEFFORDS and I offered the amendment on the reimportation of prescription drugs approved by the FDA. That was controversial.

The reason I am asking the question of the majority leader is, yesterday someone from the news media called me and said another Member of the Senate indicated that next week the Agriculture appropriations bill will be coming to the floor of the Senate. This Senator asked: How will that happen? He said: By magic.

By magic? I am a conferee. If there is a conference report on the Agriculture appropriations bill being brought to the floor of the Senate, it is not coming from a conference I was ever invited to attend.

These are very important issues.

I haven't mentioned the issue of crop loss and quality loss on crops in North Dakota and across the country where farmers have been devastated by disease and quality loss in their crops. We want to focus on that in this bill as well.

I will not give a speech. But I want to ask the majority leader: Can he tell me anything about this conference or anything about this "magic" that one Member of the Senate suggested was going to happen? Do we expect to have a conference with the House on Agriculture appropriations? And will those of us who are conferees and who come from farm States and have an abiding interest in doing the right thing have the opportunity to pursue these policies and get votes on them?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I would be glad to try to respond to some of the questions and comments.

First of all, I certainly understand the Senator's interest in this very important funding bill for agriculture in America. There is a lot of funding here. I don't know the total amount of this bill, but it is multibillion dollars, and it is important for our farm economy, for food for our people in this country, and also for exports in many ways.

My State also is heavily involved in agriculture and has to deal with a number of problems, all the way from droughts to floods—everything but locusts.

Then, of course, we have the timber industry, which is an important part of our agricultural economy. Now that is in very difficult straits, caused to a large degree because of subsidized timber products and lumber from other countries—Canada, Russia, and every place else. It is just killing our domestic timber industry. When you add to that the administration's very bad national forest policy and timber policies, they are having a hard time. So I agree, it is important, and I share the Senator's interest in it.

Maybe he is asking the wrong Mississippian about this bill. I certainly have an interest, and as majority leader I continue to try to urge the various Senate committees of appropriations and conferees to get together and complete their work. But the Senator from Mississippi, Mr. COCHRAN, is the chairman of the Senate agriculture appropriations subcommittee. He is directly and intimately involved.

I think there are two or three reasons that conference has not yet met. First of all, the main reason is the House hasn't appointed conferees. They have to appoint conferees. One of the reasons they haven't done that, as the Senator from North Dakota knows, as a former House Member knows, and I do, after they do that, they are then subject to motions in the House that could be a further complicating factor in getting the work done. I think they are waiting to appoint conferees when they are ready to complete action in conference. That is one thing.

The second thing is there still has been, up until yesterday, I think, some question about exactly how much money was going to be needed in the disaster area because, as the Senator knows, there continue to be problems that are related to the fires, and they are still trying to get an estimate of exactly what that amount of money would be.

Then there are some issues that are not going to be easy to resolve, but they are going to have to be resolved—reimportation of drugs, as the Senator mentioned. The Senate acted on that. We had the Jeffords-Dorgan amendment as amended by Senator COCHRAN, then the House language by Congressman COBURN, I believe.

You have to find some way to get a result. I am satisfied that there is

going to be some language in that bill in this area. I don't know what it is going to be. There are a lot of people with a lot more expertise in how that will work, and the safety aspects of it, and what individuals will be able to do. All of that is going to have to be resolved.

You have the sanctions question. There is no easy solution there. You have kind of the Senate position, the House position, a third position, and other options. I wish the Senator the very best in working all of that out. I am not a member of the agriculture appropriations subcommittee, and I hope not to be there when the final decision is made.

Last but not least, I assume within the next week or so the conferees will meet.

There are areas sometimes when communication between the bodies of the Congress or between the parties is not as good as it could be, I guess. But usually in agriculture you have pretty good input all around because it is so important to individual Senators.

But I am assuming conferees will be appointed at some point before too long and that there will be a vote and action taken. I quite often wish for magic, but I rarely see it in dealing with these appropriations issues.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield for one further point, I have consulted with the senior Senator from Mississippi, Mr. COCHRAN, someone for whom I have great regard. He has done a wonderful job as chairman of that subcommittee. He indicated, pretty much as the majority leader did, that the House didn't appoint conferees. The House passed the agriculture appropriations bill on July 11.

It may be a stretch, but I think sometimes there are teams around here, and the team kind of gets together to talk about how they are going to do something. When teams huddle up, they do not call both a pass play and run play; they normally call one play. It may be a stretch on my part, but I figured there is a team that has huddled up and said: You know the play. We are not going to call on agriculture because we have a couple of things we don't want to have people vote on, and we are not going to have a conference.

That is the only explanation I can have for being a conferee and never having a conference. I guess the easiest choice is the obvious choice. Let the House and the Senate vote on these controversial issues. Both of them that I mentioned would have passed by 75 percent of the House and the Senate easily.

The reason the Senator from Mississippi, the majority leader, knows I have a little bit of tension about this is, last year we had the same issue on sanctions and food shipments. The same issue went through the Senate with 70 votes and went into conference. I was a conferee. The first order of

business in the conference was to say: We insist on the Senate's position. Let's stop using food as a weapon. Let's stop having embargoes on food shipments.

The Senate voted. The Senate conferees insisted on their position, and the conference was disbanded and never met again, because the House conferees were prepared to support us and the House leadership said: No. We are going to disband the conference and bring the conference report to the floor that we haven't had a chance to work on.

My great concern is, that might happen again this year and maybe there has been no play called yet. But I hope that, really soon the majority leader will tell them that the easiest play for these controversial issues is to bring them back, and let's have votes in the House and Senate. I am willing to lose the votes if, after we count them, I am on the wrong end. But we won't lose on either of these issues.

I finally say to the majority leader, it is true that we have suffered, and his State has suffered droughts and floods. We have had fires in my State and devastating quality losses on top of floods. We need to put a piece in this agriculture appropriations bill in response to those disasters as well. That is another significant part of it.

I want to work with the majority leader. But my great concern is that there won't be a conference. If the majority leader is telling me he thinks there will be, I hope he will consult with the Speaker of the House. We both served in the House. I think it is unusual to have a bill passed on July 11, and now on September 22 they haven't appointed conferees.

Mr. LOTT. Has the Senator ever tried giving Senate or House appropriations members orders or directions? What I am saying to the Senator is, it won't do any good; they are going to do what they are going to do in due time.

All I ask from the appropriators on Agriculture, Energy and Water, and Interior is to give me a bill. Whatever you agree on is fine with me. All I want is to be able to schedule the conference report. I have tried saying, Do this; do that. How about that? What about this time? What about another time? They will act when they get ready, I guess. They will have a conference meeting and do their work or they won't. It beats the heck out of me. It is mystifying.

They have a job to do. All I am saying is I have confidence in THAD COCHRAN. I will support whatever he wants to do. I believe the farmers of North Dakota and Mississippi are going to be better for whatever he does. That is all I can do.

I am ready to go the minute they get a conference report. We will bring it to the floor like white lightning. Hopefully, that is next week. I would love to do it next week. The last time I checked, that is the end of the fiscal year. If they have it ready Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, the happier I will be.

Mr. DORGAN. If they get it ready, I hope it goes through a conference at some point. If I am a conferee, I hope I am invited.

There is the television commercial where the cowboys are trying to herd cats.

Mr. LOTT. I was one of the cowboys trying to keep the cats; they won't herd up, though.

Mr. DORGAN. I know that.

It is one thing for me to be mystified; that is probably acceptable, but I am worried when the leader is mystified.

Mr. LOTT. You are a cat, and you will want to get grouped up for a conclusion.

Mr. DORGAN. Things will slow down a lot if we have a process that tries to partition people off from this. These are important issues, and they are not done at the end of the session; they probably should have been done long ago. As we get to the end of the session, I am asking we have conferences.

To the extent you are talking to the Speaker, I hope you will encourage them: Appoint conferees, get to conference, and get the business done. That is all I am asking today. I expect to be at a conference next week.

Somebody in this Senate said yesterday to a member of the press—I assume it is probably printed today—that the conference report was going to come to the Senate floor by "magic." Well, that is a magic carpet that will surprise a lot of Members, I suppose, and will cause a lot of problems. If the Senator will support us in regular order in having a conference in which we can all participate, that is what we expect to be the case in the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO PAT WADE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise in support today and bid farewell to a dear colleague and a member of our Senate family. That person is Patricia "Pat" Wade, who has worked on Capitol Hill with distinction and loyalty for over 28 years.

Pat came to Washington from Memphis, TN. I have known her throughout these 28 years. I have been in Congress all those years and remember when she first came. She came in 1970 and actually began working for Congressman Dan Kuykendall from Tennessee—the Tennessee talking horse, we affectionately called him, a great guy and a good friend.

During her tenure on the House side, she also worked for then-Congressman THAD COCHRAN and his successor in the House, Jon Henson, both from the great State of Mississippi.

After a stint in the House, she moved over to the Senate side to work for Vice President George Bush in his Capitol office. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's office was her next stop. Then I brought her on board when I took the position in the Senate majority leader's office.

She now works with Elizabeth Letchworth, and she is administrative