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Senate

(Legislative day of Tuesday, September 5, 1995)

The Senate met at 9 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 God, You have chosen and called us to know, love, and serve You as leaders of our Nation. We praise You for the wondrous gift of life and the privilege of living this day to the fullest. You are for us and not against us and seek to liberate us from anything that would debilitate us in living and working with freedom and joy, peace and productivity. Thank You for setting us free from any burdens of worry and anxiety, so we can think creatively for You today. We commit to You the challenges and decisions we will face and thank You that You will give us exactly what we need to serve You with excellence each hour. We claim Your promise to give us strength today, peace in the pressures, light for the way; help from above, the gift of wisdom, the assurance of love. When this day is done we will be careful to give You the praise for all that You have accomplished through our efforts. Give us positive expectation of Your timely interventions and an attitude of gratitude for Your guidance. In the name of our Lord through whom we have assurance of life now and forever. Amen.

SCHEDULE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, this morning there will be a period of morning business until the hour of 9:30. At 9:30, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1976, the agricultural appropriations bill, and the pending Bryan amendment.

In accordance with the consent arrangement, following 15 minutes of debate there will be a rollcall vote on or in relation to the Bryan amendment.

All Senators should therefore be alert that there will be a rollcall vote at approximately 9:45 this morning.

Senators also should be reminded that following the recess for party conferences today, the Senate will resume the welfare bill, with a series of rollcall votes beginning at 2:45, which should complete action on the welfare reform bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business, not to extend beyond the hour of 9:30, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

The Senator from Missouri.

THE WELFARE SYSTEM

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, today we embark upon a most important responsibility, a responsibility that the people of this country called upon us to undertake in the elections of 1994. I must say that I believe the people have been yearning that Congress confront this challenge forthrightly and productively for years. But I believe that the Congress has finally gotten the message, and we have been working very hard to change the welfare system—to change it from a system for keeping the poor and maintain-

ing the poor. And, unfortunately, that is what we have done. We have maintained them and kept them poor through a system that should have become a transitional system, a system that would help people move from poverty to prosperity, move from welfare to work. And it is an important responsibility which we have.

The welfare system in the United States has been a system of failure. It has not been that the people have failed so much as the system has failed. We started out with an aggressive program in the 1960's to launch a war on poverty. And yet, in spite of the great war on poverty, spending over \$5 trillion, we have more people in poverty now than we did when we started the war on poverty. We have a greater percentage of the children of America on poverty than we did when we started the war on poverty.

It occurs to me that we have a great responsibility to change this system—to change it profoundly so that, instead of a system which ends up trapping people in lives of poverty, we make this a transitional system; that, when people really need help, we move them from the desperation of needing help to the opportunity of work and responsibility.

So this national system which has become a national disgrace is the topic now of national debate, and it should be the topic of action in the Senate today.

As you and I well know, and as our colleagues here in the Senate well know, the House has already acted forthrightly in this respect. There are differences between what the House has passed and what those of us in the Senate have been working on. But we can find a way to reconcile our differences, and I believe we can give to the President of the United States, who has said that he wants to end welfare as we know it, a constructive bill.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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