

am absolutely committed to that approach. That will be the way I will proceed with regard to this 10 minutes and everything else that I try to do.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank both Senators. I am fully satisfied with the colloquies that have resulted from my inquiry.

May I say to the distinguished majority leader that I do not believe we had the 10 minutes for each leader back when I was the majority leader the first time in 1977. I think this practice grew up in that period or soon thereafter. But in any event, as I thought I said earlier, I have never known—I cannot remember a time in which such a provocative situation might arise. I have never known that to happen. I have never known any majority leader or minority leader to transgress upon the confidence of the membership in giving its acquiescence to the request. It is just that I thought there could be such a situation. I thought we ought to try to clarify it and thus prevent some future misunderstanding. I am satisfied with what has been said.

While I have the floor, so that I will not impose upon the leaders too much, there was a second request made, and it was agreed to, and I just rise at this time to compliment the leaders on making this unanimous consent request and also on the progress that is being made and being discussed to which the majority leader has just referred, anent disorder in the Chamber.

In recent years, we have allowed too much gathering of staffs and too many conversations to go on in the rear of the Chamber, and it does not do the Senate credit. I can remember when we had no benches; we even had no seats in the rear of the Chamber. The staff stood when they came to the floor. They stood or sat on the floor of the Chamber, which I did not like. And it was for that reason that I had, when I was majority whip, chairs brought into the Chamber and a large davenport so staffs would at least have a place to sit.

And then, later, I had the gallery—this gallery here to the northeast, I guess it is—assigned to staff. Then I had these handsome benches and the bannister put back here so the staffs could be appropriately accommodated. I am glad that the request includes the words, “and that the Sergeant at Arms be instructed to rotate such staff members as space allows.” I want to thank the leaders for including that language.

I especially want to take the floor here so that the Sergeant at Arms and all Senators—the leaders need our cooperation as well—so that the Sergeant at Arms and all Senators will be well aware that when more staff members are in the Chamber than the seating accommodations will allow, then there is a special gallery for staffs, and I would hope that the Sergeant at Arms would help us to keep the number of staff people in the Chamber down. I assure both leaders they will have my cooperation. I try, as I see that there are

too many staff people—and I have two or three staff persons—I try to send mine out so as to leave only one. I am very much heartened by the letters that I have received from both leaders in response to concerns such as this, that I have expressed.

I foresee that we Senators are going to be even more proud of our leaders in the future than perhaps we have been at some times in the past. I see not only a willingness but a desire on the part of both leaders to have Members speak to them about matters that concern us. As I have noted, I followed through on that, and that has not been the end of it. Both leaders have written to me to let me know that they are aware of a matter and that they are working on it. I thank both, and I think it is to the credit of the two leaders, and certainly will redound to the credit of the Senate, if we can have better order in the coming days.

I thank both leaders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. I thank again the Senator from West Virginia for his comments. I am pleased that he noted this unanimous-consent agreement. The Sergeant at Arms is on the floor. We have discussed this matter, and we are undertaking procedures to set up this rotation of staff members. We are making sure that Senators are informed of that. We will remind Senators, probably on the 21st, of a number of these types of things so that they will not be surprised, and call on Members on both sides for their cooperation and courtesy. In fact, at the concluding part of our unanimous consent request today I will make a few comments about how we are going to try to reestablish some of the proper procedures, respect for each other's needs as Senators, and call on our Senators to be aware of that and to assist us as we try to do that. So we are not going to forget and, while we are not going to be dictatorial about it, we are going to try our very best to ask our Senators to recognize this is in the best interests of the institution and will allow us to do our work in a more efficient and effective way, I do believe.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the leader. We owe it to the Senate, we owe it to the membership, we owe it to the people of the United States of America with whom the power resides.

I thank the leader.

LEGISLATION ON AN APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, originally I had thought that at this point the Senate would grant a unanimous consent that would in effect make null and void the precedent set in March of 1995 with respect to legislation on an appropriations bill. Having spoken with the Democratic leader, we both feel, now, that the Senate would be better served by conducting a rollcall vote that would overturn the precedent.

Needless to say, this vote would occur at the first opportunity the Senate has during the appropriations process this year, at least we think that would be the appropriate time for it to occur. The Democratic leader has indicated to me that he would support such an action in the early summer of this year as we begin the appropriations process, and I look forward to his cooperation at that time, when we have the vote which would reinstate the point of order with respect to legislation on an appropriations bill.

I believe, and I think the Democratic leader would agree, that the process has been abused in recent months. There seems to be a growing use of this opportunity, and, in some of the discussions that we had at the end of the session last year, I believe that point was made by the Senator from South Dakota and perhaps the Senator from West Virginia. I think it was an unintentioned precedent that was set. I do not think it is in the best interests or the long-term interests of the Senate. I would like for us to preserve rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate. I think the Senate would be better served if we would do that, preserve that rule. So we will look for the opportunity, the best opportunity we can find, to consider changing back that precedent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. The overturning of the Chair, back in March 1995, had far-reaching consequences, as the majority leader has indicated. By overturning the Chair, the Senate no longer had the legislation on appropriations point of order to keep legislative riders from being added to crucial appropriations bills. Many on this side of the aisle believe the point of order should be restored. However, we also believe that this situation should be remedied in the same way that it was imposed on the Senate; that is, by rollcall vote. So I intend to work with the majority leader to see if we can, by rollcall vote, restore this point of order at some point in the early months of the 105th Congress.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the introduction of Senate bills, concurrent, joint, and simple resolutions not be in order prior to Tuesday, January 21.

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

Mr. LOTT. This now establishes Tuesday, January 21, as the first day in which Members may introduce legislation. I will inform my colleagues that Members may make statements during the next day or two regarding any proposed legislation, however all Senators