

I was the last to join the Agriculture Committee. I was so hopeful that we would write a new farm bill. It is not just strategy here in the Senate, or strategy here in Washington DC; it is a lot of people who are being spat out of the economy—broken lives, broken dreams, broken families. All family farmers say: That is what I care about.

Frankly, my passion isn't for all of the food industry. I am not worried about Tyson Foods or IDP. I am not worried about the big grain companies. They do fine. The part of agriculture or the food industry for which I have the passion is the family farmers—the people who not only live the land but work the land, and who are basically saying: We want to have a living wage. We want to have a price whereby we can make a little bit of profit based on our hard work so that we can support our families and live in the part of Minnesota and America that we love—rural America and rural Minnesota.

I am not a farmer. But in an odd way, when we moved to Northfield, MN, in 1969, I started organizing with farmers. I have been organizing with farmers now for almost 30 years. If there is one thing I advocate for, it is for trying to make sure farmers have some leverage to get a decent price.

We had rural economic development provisions in this bill. We had energy provisions in this bill. We had good conservation measures in this bill. We had food nutrition in this bill, which wasn't as strong as Senator LUGAR would like or that I would like, but much better than the House bill. A number of us had amendments ready that we thought would have strengthened it.

In addition, it was not perfect, but the effective target price, loan rate, with some additional assistance, would have provided some real help to family farmers—not as in you are directly now dependent upon all Government payments, but as in you are going to have a chance to get a better price in the marketplace.

Mr. DAYTON. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I am pleased to yield.

Mr. DAYTON. My distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Minnesota, has been in this body for 10 years. This is my first year in this body. I know, from my own experience in Minnesota, that it is unusual for the Minnesota Farm Bureau and the Minnesota Farmers Union to be in complete agreement. In this case, I believe we were both hearing from those organizations and many other farm organizations in Minnesota that represent the farmers in our State, that they wanted this bill. They wanted this bill to pass the Senate.

My question is, not having been in this body as long as my senior colleague, in the 10 years my colleague has been in this body, is the Senator aware of a time when both national farm organizations—the American

Farm Bureau Federation and the National Farmers Union—were standing at a press conference, the two of them, with Senators such as ourselves, and saying the same thing about this bill?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I say to my colleague from Minnesota, no. I think the reason for it is, if this bill had passed, it would have been an increase of net farm income of \$3 billion a year over the next 10 years.

We need that in farm country. I have never seen the Farm Bureau and the Farmers Union so united. I cannot believe that Senators actually voted to block this bill, obstruct this bill from passing.

Mr. DAYTON. I also ask the Senator—again, this is my first year in this body—I have just been in awe of Chairman HARKIN. And I expressed last week my deep respect for Senator LUGAR, who was the former chairman and now ranking member of the committee.

I have never before, in this process, seen anyone lead a committee as he has hold hearings for months, and have the committee markup, where all points of view were recognized, where we voted and passed it out.

Has the Senator ever seen a committee chairman give any stronger and better leadership to a committee bill than this one?

Mr. WELLSTONE. I say to my colleague from Minnesota, no. I think Senator HARKIN made such an effort to reach out that he would infuriate some of us on the committee. He really went out of his way to work with Senators on both sides of the aisle. The proof of that, again, is that every provision in the bill—except for one—was passed with a unanimous vote. It was a good markup. It was substantive. I think Senator LUGAR had a lot to do with that as well.

I think Senator HARKIN did everything he could to make this bill a bipartisan bill.

Mr. DAYTON. I would hope all the farmers in the State of Iowa, the Senator's home State, and all the farmers in America would understand and know that Chairman Harkin has done everything for countless hours and hours over the last months to bring this bill to the floor, making it a good bipartisan bill, and one that, most importantly, speaks to the critical financial circumstances in which many Minnesota and other American farmers find themselves. I think it was extraordinary and heroic. I want to give the chairman that due credit.

I thank the Senator.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I agree with my colleague.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, before I get into my statement, I just want to say one thing about all of this deliberation on the farm bill. As far as family farmers are concerned, I am glad for Virginia family farmers in the peanut business that this law is not going to be changed before October of 2002.

Changing those laws would have been devastating to those family farmers. And while the Cochran-Roberts and Hutchinson amendments were better, because of the fact this is not going into effect now, they can plan, with their leases for equipment, in this final year of this farm bill.

(The remarks of Mr. ALLEN and Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1848 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

LTV SHUTDOWN

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, there is a piece in the New York Times today, the business section, "LTV Seems on the Verge of a Shutdown," subtitled "Without Loan, Steel Giant Could End Its Labor Contract Today."

I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Dec. 19, 2001]

LTV SEEMS ON THE VERGE OF A SHUTDOWN

(By Riva D. Atlas)

After more than half a century in business, the LTV Corporation will soon shut its doors, barring a government-supplied miracle.

One of the nation's biggest steel makers, LTV put its mills earlier this month on what is called "hot idle," which would allow the company to restart them quickly if a government-backed loan comes through at the last minute.

But if help does not arrive by today, the company will ask the bankruptcy judge to end its labor contract.

A shutdown would leave about 70,000 retirees and recent employees with no or reduced pensions and health care benefits, and force the government to pick up at least some of the tab for what remains. The pension costs alone would be at least \$2 billion.

LTV's predicament—with creditors on one side saying life support no longer makes sense and workers on the other fighting to preserve jobs and benefits—may become all too familiar in the future. More companies are liquidating in bankruptcy under pressure from creditors.

In the steel industry alone, 12 companies have shut down since 1998, according to the United Steelworkers of America, and 17 more are now in bankruptcy. The steelworkers union is lobbying for government assistance—as are Bethlehem Steel, U.S. Steel and Wheeling-Pittsburgh, which want permission to consolidate in an effort to avoid LTV's fate.

LTV's decision to shut down, announced last month, comes a year into its second bankruptcy. In its first bout with Chapter 11, the company spent seven years in bankruptcy—one of the longest reorganizations of any American company. Now, LTV's management has concluded that its losses, \$2 million a day, are simply too large.

"The company was running out of cash," said James Bonsall Jr., chief restructuring officer of LTV. Unless it began to liquidate, it would be unable to pay off \$100 million in bank debt due at the end of the year, he said. Officials at J.P. Morgan Chase, which provided LTV with \$582 million shortly after the bankruptcy filing in return for first claim on LTV's assets, declined to comment.

If LTV closes, it will mean the end of a company with roots far from the steel industry. Founded by James Ling, a high school dropout from Hugo, Okla., the predecessor company, known as Ling-Temco-Vought, had interests in electronics and aerospace. An avid conglomerator, Mr. Ling's endless stream of acquisitions landed his company in 14th place on the Fortune 500 in 1967. The following year, he entered the steel business with LTV's \$425 million acquisition of Jones & Laughlin Steel. (Mr. Ling was ousted in 1970 under pressure from LTV's banks and has since emerged as an oil industry entrepreneur in Texas.)

LTV sold off the other businesses during its first bankruptcy. "We tried to get rid of the steel business, but we couldn't," said Mark Tomasch, a company spokesman. The steel business was unattractive to buyers, he said, in part because of the large health care obligations.

With \$5 billion in revenues last year, LTV was the third-largest integrated steel producer in the United States, operating steel mills in Cleveland and East Chicago, Ind.

LTV's employees, aware that jobs are hard to come by, are fighting to keep the company alive. Their situation has won them the support of members of Congress from the region. Analysts and investment bankers say the workers' expectations are unrealistic, and ultimately side with LTV's management. Demand for LTV's product is too meager to justify the company staying in business, these executives said.

[On Tuesday, the U.S. and 38 other nations agreed to reduce world output of steel by nearly 10 percent over the next decade in an effort to drive up demand. C8.]

"All these politicians want the steel mills to open or reopen, but they never look at the other side of the equation," said Charles Bradford, an independent steel industry analyst and consultant based in New York. "They say, 'Let's make steel,'" Mr. Bradford said, citing a rallying cry of the steelworkers. "But they never think about who's going to buy the stuff."

LTV's business, along with that of the other large steel makers, has steadily weakened in recent years, thanks in part to cheap foreign imports that have been flooding the United States since 1998. (Operators of so-called "mini-mills," which are not always small and recycle scrap steel into new products, have generally remained profitable.)

All the integrated steel companies, including LTV, are also paying benefits to a population far larger than their employees. At LTV, there recently were at least 10 retirees for every worker. The precise number is unclear because the union counts 10,000 more retirees than the company does.

Waves of layoffs beginning in the 1980's and continuing in the last 2 years have swelled the ranks of retirees at most steel companies. A provision in many steelworkers' contracts guarantees them the right to claim retirement benefits early if they are dismissed or if their mills shut down, said Cary Burnell, a member of the research staff at the steelworkers union. As part of their push for industry consolidation, U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel asked Congress two weeks ago to assume some of their health care costs.

LTV's workers are laboring furiously to pull off an 11th-hour rescue, but their pros-

pects are dim. Their union is hoping for a \$250 million loan backed by the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board, an arm of the Commerce Department. "We're going to fight like hell to get this loan, and fight like hell to save this company," said Leo Gerard, international president of the steelworkers union.

The company's banks, National City and KeyBank, suspended their efforts to secure such a loan last month, after deciding that they could not adequately demonstrate that the loan could be repaid.

Senator Paul Wellstone, a Democrat from Minnesota, was hoping to attach an amendment to the economic stimulus bill that would loosen such loan standards, but it is unclear when the bill will come to a vote, said a member of his staff. The union also delivered a letter, signed by 91 members of Congress, to the Commerce Department on Friday urging approval of the loan.

But with the union due to report its progress to the bankruptcy judge today, time may be running out for LTV's workers. Even if the loan is approved, the company says it will not be enough to keep LTV alive. "The company would need close to \$1 billion to return to business," said Mr. Tomasch, the spokesman.

If the bankruptcy judge permits, LTV will soon stop paying retirement and health benefits. Some of these expenses will be assumed by the government. The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation will take over LTV's retirement plan, at what it estimates will be a cost of \$2 billion. Retirees over 65 will qualify for Medicare.

Many of LTV's remaining employees will be out of luck. There are limits on the benefits the pension agency will cover, according to Mr. Burnell of the steelworkers. It will not cover, for example, a payment of \$400 a month from the company to many steelworkers dismissed between the ages of 50 to 62, intended to tide them over until they qualify for Social Security. Someone with 20 years at LTV typically qualifies for a pension of \$1,450 a month, including the \$400 monthly payment, but the pension agency would exclude recent enhancements to the pension plan and probably pay about half that amount, Mr. Burnell said.

Employees younger than 65 will also be on their own for medical costs. A fund set up by LTV when it last emerged from bankruptcy to pay for employees' health care probably will be out of money in less than a year, said Mr. Tomasch, the LTV spokesman. Among the benefits that will be lost is a medical plan that covers 80 to 90 percent of the costs of prescriptions ordered by mail. Last year, the company paid \$200 million in health care costs, he said.

If LTV's unions are unable to secure the loan, their best hope is to find a buyer for the mills.

"Plan A is to keep LTV operating and to do our work in Washington, D.C.," said Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a Democratic representative from the Cleveland area, where LTV has its biggest mill. "Plan B is to prepare our community to invite a new buyer for LTV, including providing incentives."

Finding a buyer for the Cleveland mill will not be easy. "There is excess capacity around the world, and the Cleveland mill is one of the highest-cost mills," said Mr. Bradford, the independent analyst.

Even if a buyer is found, that might not help LTV's current employees. The mills will be more attractive to a buyer without the workers, Mr. Bradford said, because then they would not be forced to assume the health care costs.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I will read a paragraph:

LTV's workers are laboring fiercely to pull off an 11th-hour rescue, but their prospects are dim. Their union is hoping for a \$250 million loan backed by the Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board, an arm of the Commerce Department. "We're going to fight like hell to get this loan, and fight like hell to save this company," said Leo Gerard, international president of the steelworkers union.

Mr. President, I along with other Senators who try to represent workers and working families and steelworkers, have written a letter to this Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board in the Commerce Department asking them to grant this loan. On the Senate floor today, I wish to associate myself with President Gerard's comments. If there is any vehicle—we are down to the wire here—if there is an economic stimulus package or economic recovery package, I will have an amendment which will give that loan board better authorizing language to make it clear that, indeed, this is their mandate to guarantee just these kinds of loans. I don't know whether or not we are going to have that package. That is being negotiated.

I have also made it clear that I think if there is any other bill that passes through in terms of providing relief for this sector of the economy or that sector, that from my point of view there also has to be an amendment which represents relief for those people who are flat on their back, out of work, without unemployment insurance any longer, without health care coverage or soon to be without coverage, or to help these steelworkers.

I wanted to cite this article because I am sure President Gerard and the steelworkers sometimes think they are shouting in the wind, that they are not being heard. Industrial work is being spit out of the economy. LTV shut down. At the taconite plant in the Iron Range of Minnesota, 1,400 workers are out of work.

I went with them the day the local president called everybody together to tell them it was over. And I got really mixed advice about whether to go because people said, if you are there, like a politician, people are just going to turn on you because they are so angry about losing their jobs. They didn't do that. People appreciate the fact you go up and you are with people, especially in these times.

But the fact is, not just for the sake of these workers who want nothing more but to work, but for financial security as well, we ought to pay attention to what has happened in the steel industry. We should pay attention to what is happening to certain vital sectors of the economy.

Again, just so President Gerard and the International Steelworkers Union don't think there aren't Senators who support them, I know others do as well. Senator ROCKEFELLER has been at this a long time. This was Senator BYRD's original idea. This Emergency Steel Loan Guarantee Board of the Commerce Department can do this. This is

their mission and mandate. They can say: We guarantee this loan. So far they have not done so. I wish we could rush through some additional language to make it clear this is their mission and mandate. We may not be able to do so. But they ought to go forward with this loan. If they don't, the consequences are going to be very harsh.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess until 3:30 today.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:03 p.m., recessed until 3:30 p.m., and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. JOHNSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we have been hearing a steady drumbeat of complaints from our Republican colleagues about the pace of judicial confirmations by the Senate. For all who know the facts, there is no basis for the charge that Democrats have engaged in delay tactics on judicial nominees. In fact, the Democratic Senate has been significantly more diligent in confirming judges under the Bush administration than the Republican Senate was at any point under the Clinton administration.

In the 5 months since Democrats gained control of the Senate, the Judiciary Committee has already held 11 hearings on judicial nominees. Under Chairman LEAHY'S leadership, we held hearings during the August recess, and also just 2 days after the terrorist attacks. In addition, we held a hearing in the Capitol Building, when the Senate offices were closed by the anthrax contamination.

As a result, 27 judges have already been confirmed in the 5 months since Democrats took control of the Senate. By the time the Senate adjourns, we are likely to have confirmed more than 30 judges—more than were confirmed during the entire first year of President Clinton's first term in office when Democrats controlled the Senate, and more than double the number confirmed during the entire first year of the first Bush administration.

Our record is good by any measure. It becomes even better when we compare it to the record of the Republican majority when they controlled the Senate during the Clinton administration.

We have held 11 judicial nomination hearings in just 5 months, almost all of which have included several judges per hearing. In 1999 and 2000, the Republicans held an average of only seven hearings for the entire year.

In confirming 24 judges since the August recess, we have had a more productive post-August-recess period than any Republican-led Senate did for a comparable period in the last 6 years.

Some Republicans are now blaming Democrats for the current number of vacancies on the Federal bench. But these vacancies were largely caused by the tactics of the Republican majority over the last 6 years. We know that our colleagues worked to impede President Clinton's executive branch nominees such as Bill Lann Lee, nominated to head the civil rights division, and Dr. Satcher, the nominee for Surgeon General. Our colleagues also blocked or attempted to block President Clinton's judicial nominees by delaying or refusing to hold hearings, and refusing to allow the Senate to vote on some nominees. The average length of time a circuit court nominee waited for a hearing under the Republican Senate was about 300 days. Some nominees waited up to 4 years for a hearing. In 6 years, the Republican Senate failed to confirm nearly half of President Clinton's nominees to the circuit courts. As a result, vacancies in the Federal courts increased by 60 percent.

No one suggests that Senate Democrats should follow the example the Republicans set over the past 6 years. The Judiciary Committee should and will continue to move forward in confirming nominees to the Federal court in a prompt manner. But it is wrong for any of us in the Senate to abdicate our responsibility to thoroughly review the record of each nominee. Lifetime appointments are at stake. The need for careful review is important not just for Supreme Court nominees but for nominees to the lower Federal courts as well. These courts hold immense power. Many important legal issues in this country are decided at the Court of Appeals level, since the Supreme Court decides fewer than 100 cases per year.

I voted to confirm most of the judges nominated by President Reagan and the first President Bush. The Senate's constitutional duty of "advice and consent" does not mean that the Senate should be a rubber stamp. It certainly does not require the approval of Federal judges who have displayed hostility to core Federal constitutional and statutory protections, or who have an extreme ideological agenda. Judges who are highly qualified, have a balanced judiciary temperament, and who are committed to upholding the Constitution and Federal law are judges that Senators on both sides of the aisle can support. But we should not support nominees with records that suggest they will roll back the rights and protections that Americans consider vital.

All nominees should have their records examined thoroughly, and they

should have hearings to answer questions about their records. Because these are lifetime appointments to courts that make decisions deeply affecting the nation, full and fair review is the least the Senate owes the American people.

The Senate has worked well together this year on a number of bipartisan efforts, including education, airline security, and bioterrorism. On the issue of judges, all of us on the Senate Judiciary Committee know that we can work well with the administration and with Senators on both sides of the aisle to confirm nominees for our Federal courts who are highly qualified, fair, and committed to upholding the Constitution and the Nation's laws. I look forward to greater efforts in the time ahead to achieve that very important goal.

I am reminded of the fact, in reviewing the Constitutional Convention, that perhaps the last major decision made at the Constitutional Convention was to change what had been initially accepted by the Founding Fathers, and that was the Senate was going to appoint Federal judges. The Senate would do it by itself. One of the last decisions made by the Founding Fathers was to have this as a shared responsibility.

It seems to me that is something that sometimes this institution loses sight of, as do the American people sometimes. They believe that once nominated, we, in effect, should be a rubber stamp to these nominees. In reading constitutional history, we will find, to the Founding Fathers this was an issue of enormous importance and consequence. They made it extremely explicit that they believed the responsibility ought to be an equally shared responsibility between the President and the Senate. It does seem to me we should meet that responsibility in ways that are fair, that reveal the qualities of the individual, and make a judgment and a decision based upon that process.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN T. O'CONNOR

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is a privilege to take this opportunity to remember my friend John T. O'Connor, who passed away on November 30, 2001. A lifelong fighter for social justice, John died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 46 while playing basketball, a sport he loved, at the YMCA near his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

John O'Connor's zest for life and boundless energy were apparent from the moment you first met him, and those extraordinary qualities continued to amaze even those who knew him best and longest. His undeniable charisma helped win an enormous circle of friends. But his life was always about causes larger than himself. He credited his passion for social justice to the example of his parents, Katherine and George, to the Catholic faith and training he felt so deeply, and to his many