We came into session at 2:15, I believe, and we essentially are doing nothing. So someone watching these proceedings might want to ask the question: If you are not doing anything, why aren't you doing something? Are you not doing anything because there is nothing to do?

That is not the case. We are not doing anything, despite the fact that there are things to be done, because people object to doing things. That is a strange situation. What should be done? The Agriculture appropriations bill should be brought to the floor. That was the intention yesterday.

That bill is one I worked on last spring. I am a member of that agriculture appropriations subcommittee. I offered an amendment that my colleague Senator CONRAD and many others worked on on a bipartisan basis. That amendment, dealing with farm disaster aid to farmers, was agreed to. It went through the entire process. But the bill has not been brought to the floor. It needs to be modified now because we have had a devastating drought in the middle of 2006. My colleague would modify, with his amendment, the original amendment and provide the disaster aid we want to provide to family farmers.

This is not some notion out of left field. It is what this country has always done. If you have a devastating drought—and tens of thousands of farmers have seen their crops dry up in the field, and they have lost everything—the Congress has always said: We want to help you.

It is interesting to me that we go all over the world helping. I am proud that our country is there to say we want to help. But what about here at home, in the middle of our country, in the northern Great Plains in North Dakota, where farmers and ranchers had to sell their entire herds because there was nothing to eat? You cannot run a farm and you cannot keep a cow if you don't have feed. What about those folks who lost everything? Do we want to help them? I think so. It is what we have always done. But we have been blocked from bringing it to the floor of the Senate. We have things to do right now, and yet we are doing nothing because we have people blocking the attempt to bring up legislation we should be working on.

So my colleague, Senator CONRAD, asked unanimous consent to go to the Agriculture appropriations bill, which we thought we were going to as of yesterday, and we believed that was the intent. If we cannot reach an agreement on that, let me ask consent of a different nature. My understanding today was they could not go to the Agriculture appropriations bill, or would not, or whatever, and they wanted to go to the India nuclear agreement.

Let me ask this: I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to the Agriculture appropriations bill pending the disposition of the Indian nuclear agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator, I object.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, the point is to say the following: We are not doing anything at this moment. There is much work to be done, some of it very important. We have a lot of farm families wondering: Will we be able to have money to run our farms, for spring planting, or are we going to be told by our bankers and lenders that we cannot continue?

There is an urgency to this. If it cannot be the case that we move to that this afternoon, then OK. If it is the case that there are objections to moving to the Agriculture appropriations bill today and someone says let's bring up the India nuclear deal, the question I raise is, Can we get an agreement following that, so that we have certainty? We are not asking for the Moon here. All we are asking for is certainty to be able to bring to the floor of the Senate and to have a vote on a disaster relief package that is supported by almost three-fourths of the Senate.

My hope is that the majority leader and others will agree with us that we need to find a time. Perhaps the time cannot be today. Can it be at a future date? As my colleague indicated, the Presiding Officer is constrained to object on behalf of the majority leader. I understand that. That may not even be his position. I know he has farmers and agricultural folks in his State as well. My hope is that, with the cooperation of the majority leader, we can lock in a determination of when we have business on the floor of the Senate that will allow Senator CONRAD and I and others to offer the amendment to provide disaster aid. That is what we are asking.

This is not a puzzle for which there is no solution. This is very simple. We just need to understand, will there be an attempt to continue to block this or will there be an obvious opportunity for us to offer the amendment? If there is an opportunity, at that point I think we can lock in a time. My colleague, Senator CONRAD, and I and others would be satisfied with that and we would know we will get to the point to pass this for the farmers in the Senate. That would be an enormous and beneficial thing to do on behalf of thousands of families who work very hard in this country. They get up in the morning and do chores. We don't use the term ''do chores'' around here. Nobody does chores in the Senate; that is, getting up in the morning, feeding cattle, dealing with the hogs, chickens, and the horses—doing chores. These are people who work very hard. I think it is important for us to recognize that this devastating drought hurt a lot of families very badly. We helped those families as a result of the loss of crops in the Gulf of Mexico as a result of Hurricane Katrina. I am pleased we did that. We should not limit help in the form of disaster aid to just those folks who lost crops due to a disaster named ''Hurricane Katrina.'' That is the point we are making.

I regret that we have not been able to get consent. My colleague has indicated—and I join him—that he would be constrained to object to moving on other issues until we get an agreement. When we get an agreement on when we are going to be able to vote on this amendment, at that point, then we can move on.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COBURN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NUTRITION SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6326, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6326) to clarify the provision of nutrition services to older Americans.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 6326) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I have agreed to have these matters resolved because they are urgent matters, and I certainly didn't want to in any way impede action on those items that are absolutely essential.

I would very much like to resolve this matter so that the commitments that were made to me yesterday, both privately and publicly, be kept and we can move on. But I was assured yesterday that if I would take down my amendment, we would then go to the Agriculture appropriations bill today so that the amendment could be offered on that bill, with all Senators' rights reserved.

That was fair. I did it in good faith. But it is not to me good faith to have commitments made and then not kept. So I find myself in the situation where I have no alternative but to object to other business being done until and unless the commitment that was made to