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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Mr. President:

The vote on cloture yesterday, while it was a disappointment, was, in no sense, a judgment on the merits of the repeal of 14-B.

It was, in fact, a failure on a simple procedural motion, a failure compounded not only of opposition to 14-B but of other elements in the Senate at this time. Nevertheless, the opponents of repeal have won their point. They have been able, by the vote yesterday, to make clear that they can prevent the Senate at this time from even getting to, let alone coming to grips with the issue of repeal of 14-B. They can, indeed, under the tolerant rules of the Senate, forestall a clear-cut test of the issue of repeal of 14-B.

In view of the margin of yesterday's vote, I no longer find myself looking through a glass darkly. The image is clear, the Senate does not wish the Leadership to press the attempt to take up 14-B at this time. Whatever the reasons, the earlier assessment of the procedural problem--that cloture would be the essential factor in reaching a decision on 14-B at this time--is now persuasive insofar as the Leadership is concerned. And I am persuaded, now, that it cannot be obtained at this time.

The President has done what he could do to resolve the issue of repeal of 14-B. The Senators who have voted for cloture on the procedural question to take up 14-B have done what they could do. This is no defeat for them. Indeed, it is no defeat on the merits for repeal of 14-B. It is a defeat for the Majority Leader and it is a victory for procrastination.

It remains for the Majority Leader, on his own responsibility and without consultation with anyone, to accept the inevitable and to recommend to the Senate that it move on with the remaining business of the session.

Therefore, I move that when the Senate completes its business today it stand in adjournment until 11 a.m. tomorrow.
Mr. President:

The vote on cloture yesterday, while it was a disappointment, was, in no sense, a judgment on the merits of the repeal of 14-B.

It was, in fact, a failure on a simple procedural motion, a failure compounded not only of opposition to 14-B but of other elements in the Senate at this time. Nevertheless, the opponents of repeal have won their point. They have been able, by the vote yesterday, to make clear that they can prevent the Senate at this time from even getting to, let alone coming to grips with the issue of repeal of 14-B. They can, indeed, under the tolerant rules of the Senate, forestall a clear-cut test of the issue of repeal of 14-B.

In view of the margin of yesterday's vote, I no longer find myself looking through a glass darkly. The image is clear, the Senate does not wish the Leadership to press the attempt to take up 14-B at this time. Whatever the reasons, the earlier assessment of the procedural problem—that cloture would be the essential factor in reaching a decision on 14-B at this time—is now persuasive insofar as the Leadership is concerned. And I am persuaded, now, that it cannot be obtained at this time.

The President has done what he could do to resolve the issue of repeal of 14-B. The Senators who have voted for cloture on the procedural question to take up 14-B have done what they could do. This is no defeat for them. Indeed, it is no defeat on the merits for repeal of 14-B. It is a defeat for the Majority Leader and it is a victory for procrastination.

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