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Electoral Reform

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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The Senate met at 12 noon, and was called to order by the President pro tempore. The Chaplain, Rev. Frederick Brown Harris, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Our Father God, on the threshold of a new day, send us forth armed with Thy power to overcome evil; if need be, to endure hardship, but in all things to serve Thee bravely, faithfully, joyfully; that, at the end of the day’s labor, kneeling for Thy blessing, Thou mayest find no blot upon our shield. Thou art the center and soul of every sphere, yet to each loving heart how near.

Renew our faith in Thy power and in the victory of Thy purposes. Here let us see again the vital and eternal things that are stronger than the noise of the world.

Quicken our love of America that we may see the shining glory of the Republic both as a heritage and a trust. We ask it in the Redeemer’s name. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

Mr. Mansfield, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the Journal of the proceedings of Monday, June 10, 1968, be dispensed with.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Withdrew objection, it is so ordered.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages in writing from the President of the United States submitting nominations were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Geisel, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session, the President pro tempore laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations, which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(For nominations this day received, see the end of Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

A message from the House of Representatives by Mr. Hackney, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House had passed the bill (S. 974) to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain lands to the city of Glendale, Ariz., with an amendment, in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

The message also announced that the House had passed a bill (H.R. 3400) to amend the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 to require aircraft noise abatement regulation, and for other purposes, in which it requested the concurrence of the Senate.

HOUSE BILL REFERRED

The bill (H.R. 3400) to amend the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 to require aircraft noise abatement regulation, and for other purposes, was read twice by its title and referred to the Committee on Commerce.

LIMITATION ON STATEMENTS DURING TRANSACTION OF ROUTINE MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. Mansfield, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that statements in relation to the transaction of routine morning business be limited to 3 minutes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Mansfield, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate go into executive session to consider the nominations on the Secretary’s desk.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INEQUITIES AND INADEQUACIES OF OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Mr. Mansfield, Mr. President, now that the last of the happenstance primaries are over and the results are in, I think it is time to make a few comments.
Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, in has been just granted by the state delegations, which collectively involve electoral system Iars. that it would be far more equitable, far viewpoint as he has expressed system and the electoral college. of a quorum. lngs would be held promptly and of the President; and in that primaries a.s day to be followed by the reselection and would allow the ning to directly through much time and energy loses by virtue of minutes in toto . there be a vote on the strict public hope of enhancing and guaranteeing the presidential instances and can be provided total protection . at the mercy of the assassin. more, the day and the need for contributions, political extravagances which are more

on the inequities and inadequacies of our electoral system. Some of the candidates went directly to the people. Others disclaimed the primary, which collectively involve millions of dollars. For what?

I hardly think these methods are any longer appropriate to the requirements of the Republic. It would appear that it would be far more equitable, far more just, and far more democratic and, above all, far more rational to adopt an electoral system based on the following procedures:

First. Abolish both the convention system and the electoral college.

Second. Extend the right to vote in primaries as well as in general elections to the 18-year-olds.

Third. Establish a nationwide primary to be held in the States on the same day to be followed by the direct election of the President; and in that fashion eliminating both nominating conventions and party standardization.

Fourth. Limit the Presidency to one term of 6 years. If the above proposals were adopted, and I know before they are, if ever, they will have to traverse a long and hard road, it would mean that the people would be able to participate fully and directly in the electoral process, from nomination to election, rather than as is now the case through intermediary state delegations. It would give younger citizens a chance to participate more actively and pertinently from the beginning to end and, hence, not suffer the bitter letdown which comes when the candidate on whom they have spent so much time and energy loses by virtue of minutes in toto. there be a vote on the strict public hope of enhancing and guaranteeing the presidential instances and can be provided total protection.

I offer the above suggestions in the hope of enhancing and guaranteeing the survival of the American political system rather than its demise. The methods of choosing the Nation's leaders must be re-examined. The methods by which they have been chosen must be changed. As of now, no matter how careful the security measures, no matter how many laws are passed, the candidate will still be at the mercy of the assassin. Furthermore, the campaigns should be reduced drastically in time, the cost scrutinized very carefully, because certainly with the exorbitant expenses of campaigns today and the need for contributions, obstructions, whether recognized or not, are creating the part of those who receive contributions. It is time to end these drawn out political extravagances which are more like circuses and to bring about the necessary changes to make our system more effective, to bring it more up-to-date and to establish a procedure more in accord with the realities and the difficulties of today.

Mr. BYRD of West Virginia. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. MANSFIELD. I yield.

Mr. BYRD of West Virginia. Mr. President, I wish to compliment the distinguished majority leader on his thoughtful and timely statement. I share his viewpoint as he has expressed it, and I wish to associate myself with his remarks.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I thank my distinguished friend.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION FOR MARITIME PROGRAMS UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on the pending business, I ask unanimous consent that, beginning at the hour of 9 p.m., there be no limitation on the Williams amendment, the time to be limited to 40 minutes, to be equally divided between the distinguished Senator from Delaware [Mr. Williams] and the distinguished Senator from Washington [Mr. Magnuson]; and that at the conclusion of that time, not to exceed 40 minutes in total, there be a vote on the Williams amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Montana? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION—ORDER FOR REFERRAL

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, after conferring with the Parliamentary and the chairmen of the Committees on the Judiciary and Commerce, I ask unanimous consent that a communication from the Department of Justice on gun legislation be referred jointly to the Committee on the Judiciary and Commerce, and that any bill on the subject be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and, upon the bill being reported by the Committee on the Judiciary, that it be referred to the Committee on Commerce.

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

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, in explanation, I want to state that there was a question, because of the interstate commerce clause, as to the responsibility and the authority of the Committee on Commerce with respect to firearms proposals. It was my personal belief that it should have been referred to a single committee and reported from that committee to the floor for consideration. But, in recognition of the realities, I see no other course to follow than that which has just been just the Senate in response to the request made.

I would express the hope that hearings would be held promptly and that a bill would be reported so that, if at all possible, it would be available for consideration, debate, and disposal by the Senate at this session.

I want to assure the Senate, so far as the leadership is concerned, that there will be no roadblocks placed in the way of considering any such bill reported and approved.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF A COMMITTEE

As in executive session, the following favorable reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MAGNUSON, from the Committee on Commerce:

A. Everett MacIntyre, of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner.

Mr. MAGNUSON. Mr. President, from the Committee on Commerce, as in executive session, I also report favorably sundry nominations in the Environmental Science Services Administration for the Coast Guard which have previously appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and, to save the expense of printing them on the Executive Calendar, ask unanimous consent that they may lie on the Secretary's desk for the information of any Senator.

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

The nominations, ordered to lie on the desk, are as follows:

Hubert W. Keith, Jr., and sundry other persons, for appointment in the Environmental Science Services Administration;

Joseph J. O'Connell, Alvin Catallini, and Louis J. Korecki, Reserve officers, to be permanent commissioned officers of the Coast Guard; and

Charles A. L. Linder, and sundry other officers, for promotion in the Coast Guard.

BILLS INTRODUCED

Bills were introduced, read the first time, and, by unanimous consent, the second time, and referred as follows:

By Mr. KUCHEL: (for himself and Mr. Murphy) S. 3617. A bill to amend the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 with respect to water rights to the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry.

By Mr. KUCHEL: S. 3618. A bill to equalize the retired pay of members of the enumerated services retired prior to June 1, 1958, whose retired pay is computed on laws enacted on or after