
⁶⁹(...continued)

I wish the distinguished President pro tempore might offer that as a formal amendment. It would save us a lot of grief in the coming years.

Mr. President, there ought to be a lesson in what happened here today and yesterday and last week. . . .

. . . .

The net result of that, Mr. President, is what the distinguished President pro tempore said on Sunday about this body, which has the ability to debate and amend and consider legislation. I will tell my colleagues, if there is a great disappointment to this Senator in my 8 years here, it is that some of the most important issues we can discuss we never have the chance to debate and amend on this floor because we are totally immersed in this budget process from January to December; maybe this year shorter.

. . . .

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, John Stuart Mill said, "On all great subjects, much remains to be said." This is a great subject, the reconciliation bill, and much remains to be said. . . .

I have seen the Senate many times when it gave me reason to be concerned about its future. I have also seen it on some occasions when it gave me reason to be proud. . . .

Tonight I think that we should pause to reflect upon this institution to which Gladstone, that great English statesman who lived during the long reign of Queen Victoria and who was Prime Minister of England four times, referred when he spoke of the U.S. Senate as "that remarkable body, the most remarkable of all the inventions of modern politics." That is what this institution is. . . .

. . . .

The U.S. Senate is the centerpiece of the great compromise. It is the masterpiece of the men who wrote the Constitution. . . . They were wise men, and they saw the need for a system of checks and balances, and the Senate was the balance wheel of that system. The Senate was given extraordinary powers But the basic cement that was the very foundation of this balance wheel were two in number, the right to debate and the right to amend. The other body may amend, but the other body may also issue a rule which, if agreed to, will confine amendments to one in number or two in number or three or none and direct that a certain Member will be the only Member who will offer that one amendment or those two amendments.

The House has the previous question, but not the Senate. The Senate allows unrestricted debate. We now and then restrict ourselves through the cloture motion, which first was created in 1917. But the right to debate and to amend is why we should be proud of this institution, why we should revere it.

The Constitution, in section 7 of article I, says that measures that raise revenues shall begin in the House of Representatives, but it also says that the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other bills. So there is a constitutional right reposed in the Senate to amend eve[n] revenue bills.

(continued...)