

we are all anxious to complete our work to make our departures for our August recess work period.

At this time I can only advise Members, to the best of my knowledge, we should expect additional votes this evening within the hour. At any point during the evening, when I find information by which I can advise otherwise, I will ask for time to do so. But my best advice at this point is we must be prepared to stay for additional votes tonight, and I will keep Members informed.

I want to also express my appreciation to the Members on both sides of the aisle for your patience with these times being as they are.

PERMISSION TO ENTERTAIN MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1996

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding clause 1 of rule XXVII, the Speaker may entertain motions to suspend the rules on Wednesday, September 4, 1996.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not intend to object. I would, however, like to clarify with the distinguished majority leader our understanding of what the procedure will be on Wednesday, September 4, with regard to suspensions.

It is our understanding that his office will supply us with the final list of suspensions he intends to consider on September 4 by noon on August 21st. We have requested this information from him in order to notify our Members in advance just what bill will be under consideration so that our Members who are interested in debating the bills could arrange to be here. It is our understanding that no additional bills will be added to this list without the unanimous consent of the minority.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FROST. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is absolutely correct in the way he has stated it. We will supply that list by the 21st of August noon, and that indeed no other suspension would be brought up except by additional unanimous consent. And I would, again, like to express my appreciation for the leadership on the minority side of the aisle for their cooperation in working with us on this.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the majority leader, and I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the next item of business will be the rule on the defense authorization conference report. It is my intention to only use 2 or 3 minutes and then, when the manager on the Democrat side has done the same, we would then yield back our time and expedite this rule without a vote.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SOLOMON. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I cannot assure the gentleman that it will only be 2 or 3 minutes. It will not be the full time. We do have a request by the gentleman from New Mexico for a colloquy. We also have a request by the ranking member on the Committee on Commerce for the opportunity to speak. But we will move along as quickly as we can.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, a minimum amount of time on both sides.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3230, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 498 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 498

*Resolved*, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 3230) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 1997 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 1997, and for other purposes. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] is recognized for one hour.

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. FROST], pending which I yield myself such time as I might consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 498 provides for the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3230, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997.

The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. It further provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

The waiver includes a waiver of the 3-day layout rule, as the report was filed only Tuesday. This was necessary so that the House could complete consideration of this measure before the Au-

gust recess tomorrow. Further, the report has been available in committee offices so Members and staff have had ample time to review it.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fair rule that provides for expeditious consideration of this critically important legislation. I urge support of the rule. I will not bother to get into the details of the bill. It has been debated at considerable length. We all know the contents.

Mr. Speaker, I urge prompt action on the rule, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. RICHARDSON], our ambassador at large, for the purposes of engaging in a colloquy.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of entering into a colloquy with the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. SCHAEFER], the chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power.

As the gentleman knows, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico will have a direct impact on many of our constituents in that State. While I support amending the land withdrawal act, I would like to clarify some aspects of this amending language.

First, I have concerns about designating November 1997 as the opening date for the facility. If new health and safety problems arise prior to start-up, I want to be assured that resolving these concerns will take precedence over the opening date.

Secondly, the issue of proper oversight is an important one. I want to ensure that the EPA will have a full capability to provide for the safe operation and regulation of WIPP.

Finally, I am concerned about the exemption from RCRA no-migration standards. As the gentleman knows, I have advocated for the implementation of an independent review of EPA's decision to strike the RCRA no-migration rules, possibly by the National Academy of Sciences. I want to be assured that the deletion of RCRA no-migration standards will not result in a degradation of environmental standards at WIPP.

Let me say that I appreciate the work of the gentleman. The work of the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. SKEEN] in responsibly moving this language forward. I do support the provisions affecting WIPP, but would appreciate any comment he has on these matters.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RICHARDSON. I yield to the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I truly thank the gentleman from New Mexico, and it has been a great pleasure working with him on this particular situation. I do appreciate his concerns. A timely opening of WIPP is very important. It is equally critical that the facility opens and operates in a very safe manner.

First, the 1997 opening date is not a hard, statutory requirement, but is