□ 1408

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUNNING of Kentucky). On this rollcall, 403 Members have recorded their presence by electronic device, a quorum.

Under the rule, further proceedings under the call are dispensed with.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I regret that my being involved in an event at the White House prevented me from voting on rollcall No. 698, a quorum call. Had I been able to vote I would have voted ''present.''

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2126, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1966

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida [Mr. YOUNG] has 5 minutes remaining.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON], the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

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

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire of the gentleman from Pennsylvania, if this bill goes down, what does he think the next one is going to look like?

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LIVINGSTON. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, the problem, as I see it, is, we had over 2000 suggestions and recommendations to the bill. Obviously, we had to make a judgment on each of those recommendations as we went through the bill. Certainly, it would be a problem because as it gets involved in negotiations, there will be less of everything available. So there is no question in my mind, that there will be some substantial changes in the bill.

Mr. LIVINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. There was some clapping when the gentleman said that. Some Members believe that what the gentleman from Pennsylvania said is a good thing. As a matter of fact, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] spoke against the bill. He thinks that there is too much spending. The gentleman, various other folks on the other side of the aisle and on this side of the aisle have spoken against the bill for various reasons.

We got a letter here from Alice Rivlin, dated today, saying the President of the United States is going to veto this bill because it is too much spending. I know that that represents a large sentiment in the minority, the minority.

My colleagues, I address these comments to my friends on this side, we are the majority. We have been elected to set the agenda. One of the planks in the Contract With America was to provide for a strong national defense.

Now, there are those among us who came to Congress with one issue or two issues in mind that had nothing whatsoever to do with the strong national defense. And I agree with them on those issues. Some want to balance the budget. Some believe that the protection of innocent life is the most important thing in this world. I agree with them. I have got a 100 percent pro-life record. But I also think that we as elected Members of the House of Representatives have the responsibility to represent our mutual constituents. We have the responsibility of representing every live: man, woman and child in our districts, every man, woman and child in America. Under the Constitution of the United States, one of our primary, if not our primary, responsibilities is to provide for an adequate defense for this Nation.

The House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Appropriations have met in conference and we have produced a conference report in bipartisan fashion which provides for not only an adequate defense but for a better defense than the President of the United States was prepared to provide if his numbers had governed.

Last year in the rose garden in front of the White House, the President of the United States, surrounded by people with medals of all sorts, his Joint Chiefs of Staff, said his plan to reduce the military, the pentagon, had gone so far that he was $25 billion short, short in his plans to protect the sanctity of the United States to provide for the national defense. And, therefore, he was going to recommend that we spend $25 billion more.

Guess what? The check never arrived. It never came. In his budget proposal in February, he provided for spending on defense of $7 billion less than last year, $7 billion less than last year.

This conference committee, in conjunction with the Senate, said, no, Mr. President. We are going to hold you to your promise. We are going to provide exactly, not more, not less, but exactly what we provided last year. We are going to stem the flow. We realize that defense has been the scapegoat for every domestic program on earth for 11 straight years, that for the last 11 years procurement has gone down by almost 75 percent, that in real terms, spending on defense has gone down by nearly 30 percent, and that it is time to stand up for the young men and women in uniform in this country and provide the basic services, the basic maintenance, the basic operations, the basic training that they need to do their job.

□ 1415

Now the President of the United States, the President of the United States, may well come to us in a few weeks and say he wants to send 25,000, or any number, of troops to Bosnia, and some of my colleagues want to put a preemption in there and say, ''No, Mr. President, you can't do that.'' I suggest to my colleagues that we can do that, that he must come to Congress, that he cannot ignore us, but to take the unheard-of-step, unconstitutional step, of binding him before he has taken that action, is to play in the hands of the foolish of the world who believe that it is in the best interest of the pacifists of the world to simply bind the President in future events. How in the world can we really seriously say that no matter what happens in this world, no matter how much more peaceful in this world the President can make Europe by helping Bosnia, that we are going to cut it off today without knowing what is going to happen tomorrow and that under no circumstances can we put 10 troops in Bosnia, let alone 25,000?

Let us cross that bridge when we come to it. Let us not unconstitutionally bind the President of the United States. Let us pass a good defense bill, even with last year. Let us not get hung up on pro-life issues that are important to all of us who are pro-life, but let us not forget that our first responsibility is to provide for an adequate national defense for every man, woman, and child in America today.

This is a good bill. Pass it.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I stand before this House and offer a pledge of allegiance. However, unlike the pledge we take each morning, this pledge of allegiance is to those who are not yet born.

Simply said, I pledge allegiance to the right to life.

My belief in the right to life is not debatable, it is not contestable, it is not even open to discussion. It is an issue that simply offers no compromise and yet, today we face a dilemma.

That dilemma surrounds our vote on the 1996 Department of Defense Appropriations Act conference report. That report contains a provision that prohibits funds from being made available to perform abortions at DOD medical facilities only if specifically authorized in the National Defense Authorization Act. The Appropriations Committee has now placed a burden of responsibility squarely on the shoulders of those on the authorization committee.

Well, I accept that responsibility. And as I cast my vote for the appropriations conference report, I clearly understand that I must work hard to make certain the 1996 DOD authorization language directs that those facilities will not be used for abortions. At the same time, a vote for the appropriations conference report is a vote of support for our national defense and the needs of our Nation's military.

The correct forum to fight the battle against performing abortions in DOD facilities is in the authorization conference committee. As such, I encourage my colleagues to support the appropriations conference report.

Vote today for the conference report but I implore each and everyone in this chamber to support the design of language that prohibits this unacceptable procedure in our 1996 Defense Authorization Act.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the conference report accompanying H.R. 2126, the Defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 1996. My colleagues, this conference agreement appropriates a total of $243.3 billion for defense programs—$6.9 billion more than the administration's request