MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed a bill of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1575. An act to rename the Washington National Airport located in the District of Columbia and Virginia as the ''Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport''.

□ 1600

CONCERNING ATTORNEYS' FEES, COSTS, AND SANCTIONS PAYABLE BY THE WHITE HOUSE HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 345, and I ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 345

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 107) expressing the sense of the Congress that the award of attorneys' fees, costs, and sanctions of $285,864.78 ordered by United States District Judge Royce C. Lamberth on December 18, 1997, should not be paid with taxpayer funds. The first reading of the joint resolution shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the joint resolution and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by Representative Hayworth of Arizona or his designee and Representative Stark of California or his designee. After general debate the joint resolution shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be fifteen minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the joint resolution for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the joint resolution to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), ranking member of the Committee on Rules, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purposes of germane debate only.

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks, and to include extraneous material.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, this is as straightforward as it gets when it comes to rules. This is a wide open rule that was voted out of the Committee on Rules last night without dissent or, in fact, really without debate.

The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate, as we have heard, equally divided between the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) or his designee and the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK) or his designee.

The rule provides that the Joint Resolution be considered as read and provides for one motion to recommit, with or without instructions, which is of course the guarantee we always provide for the Minority.

It is truly a bipartisan product that should elicit universal support, in my view. I cannot understand that this could in any way be a controversial rule. The only point that could have been of controversy was overcome last night by a brilliant suggestion by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), which was accepted unanimously by the full committee to make this as fair and as bipartisan and as open as has ever been done in the recorded history of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time,

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS), my colleague, my dear friend, for yielding me the customary half-hour; and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has just returned from a 3-month recess; and, after all that time, the American people expect something substantive from their representatives. Today, they are not going to get it.

There are a lot of issues that need addressing in this country. As President Clinton said in his State of the Union: This is an opportunity for action. We need to protect Social Security, reduce the size of classrooms, expand Medicare, increase the minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, and a lot more. The list of issues that are important to the American people is very long, it is very diverse, but it does not include the attorneys' fees for the White House Health Care Task Force.

I bet if we walked down the street today, we would not find a single person that would say that the utmost concern on their mind was the fees of the White House task force on health. They would probably say they were more concerned with making a decent living, sending their children to college or affording decent health care.

But this Congress will waste time debating the issue of these fees. It is nearly the first issue we have taken up on this the second day back in session; and I, for one, Mr. Speaker, think there are a lot more important things that we should be doing.

This is a politically driven, partisan resolution which, even if it passes, will do absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, the issue we are debating today is a sense of the Congress resolution. It cannot even become law. In other words, if the House passes it, we will have said, in effect, here is what we think, for what it is worth, and that is it.

Other than expressing an opinion, this bill does nothing. It does not make anyone do anything. It is a politically motivated, partisan attack; and, frankly, as I said, it is a total waste of time.

Instead of this resolution, we should save Social Security. We should help working families afford child care. We should protect people's pensions. We should reform managed care.

So I urge my colleagues to let us get to work on something just a little bit more important than this.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I was hoping the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY) would say that this was a great rule also.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, this is a great rule also.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that we got the rule out with the gentleman's help.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH), author of the resolution.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

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

Mr. HAYWORTH. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me for a colloquy. Prior to this rule resolution, the gentleman and I had discussed the following scenario for the advice of Members.

It is this gentleman's hope on this side of the aisle that there would be no amendments for which a recorded vote would be requested. And that if there are no amendments that come to a vote, final passage, not necessarily the rule, which may or may not call for a vote, but after the rule, it would not be our intention to ask for a recorded vote.

I think the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) would concur in that, with the understanding that we obviously cannot control our colleagues' actions. But I ask the gentleman if that is his understanding.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from California for his comments. No doubt there will be some contentious debate here in the well, but in an effort to maintain the civility and comity of the House and indeed