

2003 through 2006, and for other purposes, pursuant to House Resolution 229, reported the bill back to the House with an amendment adopted by the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, was read the third time, and passed, and a motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1527, the bill just passed.

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

There was no objection.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I ask for this time for the purposes of inquiring of the majority leader the schedule for the coming week.

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

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the House will convene on Monday at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider several measures under the suspension of the rules, and a final list of those bills will be sent to the Members' offices by the end of this week. Any votes called on those measures will be rolled until 6:30 p.m. on Monday. For Tuesday and the balance of the week, we expect to consider additional bills under suspension of the rules, as well as H.R. 1904, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003, and the Department of Defense authorization bill.

And, finally, I would like to note for all the Members that we are waiting on Senate action on a variety of issues such as the jobs and growth package and the President's Global AIDS Initiative. Members should be aware that we are likely to be in session Friday next, possibly late into the evening, as we work to resolve these important pieces of legislation.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the leader for his information with respect to our schedule for next week, and when we go in, and the fact that we expect certainly to meet on Friday or perhaps late on Friday.

With respect to the forest bill, Mr. Speaker, what type of rule does the

gentleman anticipate? It is my understanding that an unlimited number of amendments were submitted to the Committee on Rules, and I would hope they would be made in order.

I see the chairman of the Committee on Rules on the floor. Obviously we are hopeful that we will have our opportunity to offer our alternatives to this bill. There are obviously some controversial items in it.

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

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding.

I will simply say that we just a couple of hours ago completed the hearing portion for consideration of the measure, and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the ranking minority member on the Committee on Resources, came forward with a substitute which he asked that we make in order, and we had four other amendments that were proposed, and we are working with Members of the minority right now to see which of the proposals we might be able to accommodate. So we are going to try our darnedest to make sure there are options that our colleagues have as we proceed with this very important piece of legislation, which I am happy to see there is strong bipartisan consensus to move ahead with this bill.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I am always pleased to hear that they are considering the options, but considering the options and approving the options appear to be two different things.

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

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I just do not want to predetermine what the Committee on Rules might do as we want the committee to work its will and take into consideration these proposals, and I know the gentleman would not want to predetermine what the Committee on Rules might do.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I understand the chairman's appreciation of the vigorous debate and differences that are sometimes debated within the bosom of the Committee on Rules. I remember those same kinds of disputes when we were in the majority. I am aware of the fact, however, that sometimes those vigorous disputes as to what ought to be and ought not to be in the rule are sometimes resolved by leadership suggesting alternatives that then create consensus very quickly. It has been my experience in the past. So I am hopeful that the leadership will work its will on the creation of consensus to allow full consideration.

We are being lighthearted in this effort, but I do not want anybody confused by the lightheartedness, that we feel very, very strongly about having full consideration of the alternatives that we offer, just as the gentleman,

the chairman of the committee, felt so strongly about in 1991, in 1992, in 1993, and 1994 when we were in charge. And I would hope that the gentleman would pursue those concerns on behalf of the minority in our party as vigorously as he pursued them on behalf of the minorities of his party.

To the majority leader, the DOD authorization bill will be on the floor, I understand, as the gentleman pointed out. Again, we have the same situation, as he knows. There are some extraordinarily controversial items included within this authorization bill. I might say to the leader some of these, as the gentleman knows, are issues which have been brought up within the last 30 days that make some of the most sweeping changes that have been made in the Civil Service System since its creation and exempt fully, when we include Homeland Security, one-half of the Federal employees from protections that they now enjoy under title 5, title 41 and other pieces of legislation passed by the House and the Senate.

In addition to that, as the gentleman knows, there are some very substantial questions with reference to environmental statutes that are on the book and possible exemptions from certain statutory requirements dealing with endangered species, dealing with clean air, dealing with other items.

Could the gentleman tell me the rule that is contemplated and whether or not amendments will be made in order, particularly those two items, and there may be multiple amendments, but whether or not there will be full consideration of those very controversial items?

I will tell the gentleman, as he knows, I have consistently, since 1981, supported authorization bills and am a strong supporter of defense, and I have always supported appropriations bills, but at the same time the fact that something is included in a bill, if no opportunity is given to debate those items which may be controversial as opposed to those items which are ensuring the strength of our country and the capability of our Armed Forces and the quality of life for our personnel, we do not want to have to vote against those, clearly, and probably will not. But we do want the opportunity to debate these very controversial items and to provide alternatives.

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

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

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

As the gentleman knows, the Department of Defense authorization bill is a huge, huge piece of legislation, which includes providing for our national defense, fighting the war on terror, providing for the military and their families, particularly their quality of life. It is a very complicated, very important piece of legislation.

The gentleman is correct that some provisions were brought to some people's attention some 30 days ago, but

those two issues that the gentleman talks about, Mr. Speaker, are issues that have been worked on for a long time by a lot of people and have gone through regular order. Both the environmental issue and the personnel issue have been worked on by their respective committees, the Committee on Government Reform and the Committee on Resources, and have been voted on by those two committees to be sent out of those committees and put into the Department of Defense authorization bill.

□ 1400

I know that the chairman of the Committee on Rules is on the floor to make an announcement about the intentions of the Committee on Rules meeting and dealing with amendments and their submission to the Committee on Rules.

Again, it is very difficult to predetermine what type of rule would be written for the Department of Defense authorization bill, but I must say certainly this is vitally important to this country. We want to have a full and open debate about it, and I am sure the Committee on Rules will take a look at those amendments that will be offered and make a decision as to what kind of rule to write, but I do not think that will be done until next week.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman, and yield to the chairman of the Committee on Rules.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say the majority leader is absolutely right. We know there is a full schedule which the distinguished majority leader has just outlined for next week, but, clearly, most of the time for next week will be spent on this House floor dealing with this very important issue, the defense authorization bill. In light of that fact, my friend from Maryland can clearly be assured that there will be a wide range of amendments that will be made in order for consideration of the measure.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the chairman of the Committee on Rules for that assurance, and again would reiterate that I am presuming that those assurances go to the two particular items, as well as other items that clearly are in this bill. I thank the gentleman for his assurance.

Mr. Leader, you mentioned the tax bill, the jobs opportunity bill, that passed this House and which Senate is now considering, as I understand it. Assuming the Senate passes that piece of legislation today or tomorrow—I see the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means on the floor—when is it your expectation that they will go to conference on this bill?

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I do believe that the other body expects to complete consideration of the economic growth package later on this after-

noon, or, if not this afternoon, sometime tomorrow. The final product that passes the other body will likely be dramatically different, if not dramatically less desirable, than what passed this body.

At this point I cannot give the gentleman a good sense of how or when this important legislation will be resolved. What I can say is that our hope is that we get the best, most robust growth bill to the President as soon as possible. As a tentative goal, we would like to get the bill to the President before we break for the Memorial Day recess.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that comment. I understand that he cannot, with any preciseness, give us an answer. Is it, however, the intent that this bill will be conferenced, that there will be a full conference on this bill?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I am not advised as to what procedures the House will take, only because we need to take a real good, hard look at what ultimately passes the other body before we can make a decision as to what options are available to us.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his comment. I would only observe that we certainly on this side, whatever happens in the Senate, would hope and expect that regular order would be followed and that a conference would occur in which the minority, both in the Senate and the House, for that matter, would have an opportunity to make its observations and opinions clear on either alternative, or portions of each.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, we are always interested in protecting the rights of the minority.

Mr. HOYER. I wanted time for that comment to resonate in the body, but I appreciate the observation, even though it stretches my credulity.

The debt limit, Mr. Leader, do you expect we will have an opportunity to have a full and open debate on this matter?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, I am sure the gentleman is aware that the House has already passed an increase in the statutory debt limit. It is my understanding that the other body has a unanimous consent agreement to consider the House bill, along with a series of amendments.

Frankly, hopefully the Senate would not pass any of those amendments and pick up the House bill and pass it sometime next week and send it to the President.

Mr. HOYER. If the leader knows, is that debt limit extension still \$894 billion? Does the gentleman know?

Mr. DELAY. I am not advised at this moment. I apologize to the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. The last item I would inquire about, Mr. Leader, is the unemployment compensation extension. As the gentleman knows by the efforts that the gentleman from Maryland

(Mr. CARDIN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) have been making, this is of great concern to us.

Does the leader have any expectation that the unemployment compensation extension will be on the floor next week?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, I want to make sure that the gentleman is referring to the program that was created as a result of the economic impact of 9/11. The Federal unemployment insurance program that existed for decades is still around, and people need to understand is still around and working well. So it seems to me that if the gentleman and Members of this body are actually interested in a broad expansion of the unemployment insurance program, I would hope that those Members would work with the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means and move it through regular order so that every Member of this body ultimately could have some impact on that piece of legislation, that very important legislation.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the leader for those comments. I will be more specific so the leader understands what I am talking about.

In October of last year, as the gentleman recalls, we were hopeful that we would extend unemployment insurance in our last day in session in October and take up a Senate bill which was passed in a bipartisan, overwhelming fashion. We did not do that, as the gentleman recalls, notwithstanding the fact we gave our unanimous consent to that action. As a result of not doing that, 800,000 Americans went off unemployment insurance on December 28 of last year.

The President, of course, observed that he thought that was unfortunate, and he was for us extending it. However, that was not done, as the gentleman recalls, either until the last week in January or to the first week in February, I think it was probably the last week in January, which meant from December 28 through late January people who were unable to find jobs were not included in an extended unemployment insurance position. Therefore, they had no income coming in to their families, at least from their perspective. That is what we are concerned about.

I would reiterate, Mr. Leader, it is our view that there are some 3 million people at risk. It was 800,000 last October. We believe it is 3 million people under State programs and Federal programs that are at risk if we do not extend unemployment insurance, as we did in the 1990 recession, as we did in 1982. In fact, we extended it in both those instances beyond that which we had already. It was those programs which I was referring to, Mr. Leader.

I yield for any comments the gentleman may wish to make.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is correct in reciting the history of extending benefits. What I seem

to remember was that the House passed a bill, and the Senate refused to pick it up back in October or November, I forget the time frame.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, if I might, Mr. Leader, what happened, as I recall, was Mr. NICKLES and Mrs. CLINTON agreed on a bill that was then passed overwhelmingly by the Senate in response to our bill and sent here. In fact, some 2½ months later we adopted a very similar piece of legislation, but only after people had gone off for 4 weeks their extended benefits.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield, I just remind the gentleman that our bill, the House bill, passed overwhelmingly by this House, and the Senate did pass their own bill, but our bills crossed in the night, and the Senate refused to take up our bill.

But be that as it may, the extensions are there, and certainly we are interested in taking suggestions from Members about how we would accomplish this in the shortest period of time. But I must tell the gentleman that the best way to take care of people that are unemployed is to find them a job, and, to do that, pass the job and economic growth package, the energy package, a transportation package and a pension security package.

All the economic development packages that this House has been in the lead on, it would be nice to get them through the other body and to the President so that jobs can be created and people can find a job, rather than have to rely on unemployment benefits.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his observations. I certainly agree with him that in the long term the best solution is the creation of an economy that creates sufficient jobs for all Americans who are seeking jobs.

My friend knows that there are 6 million Americans who are unemployed at this point in time, the highest unemployment we have had in approximately a decade. It is nice to say that if we pass those bills, we will create new jobs, but the people who lose their unemployment at the end of this month and who will not have sufficient funds to pay their mortgages, to purchase groceries for their families, are going to have little solace because we are going to pass some bill that will create some jobs sometime down the road. But I appreciate the gentleman's observation.

Does the gentleman want to make an additional comment?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I am not an expert on unemployment insurance, but it is my understanding that the unemployment insurance program is still in place, and 26 weeks, every State in the Nation gets 26 weeks when they are let off.

I know the gentleman is referring to those that are running to the end of their benefits. I might point out to the gentleman that that is not 6 million people, and those extensions of benefits

are still in place for those that are still receiving benefits.

Having said that, there is time, if we can work out some sort of agreement, to do something for those that may have their benefits expiring. So there is time to work, and there are vehicles by which we could do it. But I hope the gentleman is not suggesting that we go beyond regular order in accomplishing passage of such legislation.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I tell the leader, on this side of the aisle regular order is a concept which we support, but it will not be of help to people if we do not act, and by May 31, you indicate 6 million, I am saying 3 million. I am not sure whether it is Federal-State, about a million are at risk on the State program, or maybe 2 million on State and 1 million on Federal. There is a total of 3 million at risk.

I tell the leader that it is my understanding in each of the recessions in the early 1980s and in 1990, we extended the existing program's coverage for substantially more weeks than we have done in this recession.

With 6 million people unemployed, with jobs difficult to find for those 6 million people, and, as the gentleman knows, under the program you cannot receive benefits unless you are, in fact, looking for a job, I would say that it would be appropriate for us to do this in the regular order. Of course, a suspension bill is in the regular order. As a matter of fact, we are going to do a number of suspension bills next week.

The leader pointed out correctly that we passed unemployment extension through the House last year in the fall on a largely, not largely, but a large bipartisan vote, so I think that could be done. But I thank the gentleman.

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman would just yield further, I really do not want to tread in water that may get too deep for me, because, again, I am not an expert on this, but I understand in our looking through how we can accomplish what the gentleman may want or not want, it is my understanding that there is a significant amount of money left in the States at this moment, and that if the States themselves wanted to extend their unemployment benefits and it was in their best interests to do so, they could do it.

□ 1415

So I think it is a stretch to say that we are at a crisis point, that we have to move quickly and not deliberatively on this issue.

So we are looking at it. We are taking advice from Members. The Committee on Ways and Means is looking at opportunities to address this problem, and we will do it as soon as and as fast as we can.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman for his observation. We may differ on the nature of a crisis, but my belief is that every family that faces its unemployment extension benefits ending on May

31 for themselves believes that is a crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, MAY 19, 2003

Mr. DELAY. I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 2003, for morning hour debates.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2003, TO FILE REPORT ON H.R. 1950, FOREIGN RELATIONS AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEARS 2004 AND 2005

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on International Relations have until midnight on Friday, May 16, 2003, to file a report on H.R. 1950, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005.

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

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE ON RULES REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 1588, THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet next week, the week of May 19, to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. The Committee on Armed Services ordered the bill reported yesterday, May 14, 2003, and is expected to file its report in the House tomorrow, May 16, 2003.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy with a brief explanation of the amendment to the Committee on Rules in room H-312