

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1 of rule XXI, points of order are reserved.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I take this time for the purpose of inquiring of the majority whip the schedule for the week to come.

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

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding and also for the cooperation of those on the appropriations bills this week as we move to an early conclusion of this week's work.

Next Monday, the House will convene at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. We will consider several measures under suspension of the rules. A final list of those bills will be sent to Members' office by the end of this week. Any votes called on those measures that Members are given notice of will be rolled until 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

On Tuesday and the balance of the week, the House will consider several bills under a rule. First of all, the Science and Departments of Commerce, State and Justice Appropriation Act for fiscal year 2006. Following that, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2006; and then, finally, H.R. 2745, the United Nations Reform Act.

I yield back to my friend, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that information.

First, if the distinguished whip knows, my presumption is, based upon the schedule that has been submitted, that the probability is we will not have votes on Friday next. Is that a reasonable assumption, do you think, for our Members to make?

Mr. BLUNT. Certainly based on the experience we have had for the last three Fridays, the cooperation of both the ranking member and the leadership of the chairman and the subcommittee chairmen on the appropriations committee, we have been seeing this work go a little faster than we had anticipated. That could happen again next Friday.

The experience again of the last three Fridays would lead one to believe that, but next week we will adopt the same approach. We will get this work done early if we can but would advise Members to plan to be here on Friday because we will want to complete the entire agenda that we have laid out for next week's schedule.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, can the gentleman tell us, with respect to the appropriations bills, which day of the week, Tuesday and thereafter, you might expect each of the individual bills to come up in particular?

Of course, the defense appropriations bill is of great interest to our Members.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I believe we will do those in the order that they appeared starting on Tuesday. So I would expect Tuesday's work to include the Science, Commerce, State, Justice Appropriations Act, and then move on to defense appropriations on Wednesday if we are completed with the previous bill, and then to bring the bill to the floor on United Nations reform after that.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that information.

I note, Mr. Whip, that the intelligence authorization bill, which was schedule to be on the floor today, which had been pulled, is not on the schedule for next week.

That obviously is a very important bill. And it is, I would say to my friend, as I understand it, a bill which has the agreement between the chairman of the Intelligence Committee and the ranking Democrat on the Intelligence Committee. So it would seem to be a bipartisan agreement on the substance of the bill. Can the whip tell us when we might see that bill back?

I am sure you agree it is a very important bill, providing for the work of the national intelligence director and providing to make sure that we can keep this country safe from terrorists, and I know that both sides are hopeful that it will come forward pretty quickly.

Can the gentleman tell us when that might be on the floor?

Mr. BLUNT. I would say, in response, that, interestingly, the discussion on that bill, it is an important discussion, is largely between the new Director of National Intelligence and the Armed Services chairman because of some commitments that seemed to have been made and I think were made during the adoption of the 9/11 bill of things that would be included in this bill.

That discussion is going on. We are going to work hard to do everything we can to facilitate a final and complete understanding between the administration and the House on the issues that they are discussing right now. It involves military intelligence and some commitments and discussions that were conducted last year before we moved forward with what was called at that time the 9/11 bill that created the National Intelligence Director's job and did a number of other things to achieve those goals that the whip just mentioned in terms of securing our country in every way that we can.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the whip for the information.

It may be helpful to know that I believe on our side of the aisle, we believe that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN's) agreement was appropriate in the sense that the flexibility be given to the National Intelligence Director to provide for the best possible personnel assignment

with reference to maintaining our security and intelligence apparatus in the most effective mode would be correct, if that is of any help to the whip as he considers the support that that proposition may have on the floor.

I realize there are those on his side of the aisle who have some concerns about it. I understand that the Secretary of Defense may have some concern about it. But I think, frankly, I would hope that a very substantial majority of the House would agree both with the Republican chairman of the Intelligence Committee and the Democratic ranking member of the Intelligence Committee.

The gentleman does not have to comment on that, but I thought that it might be useful information for him.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, if I could comment, I would say that we are eager to reach a final understanding on this. But, also, we are eager to be sure that whatever commitments were made and were reached between the administration and the chairman of a significant committee in the House are fully understood and fully complied with. You know, there can be misunderstandings in these kind of discussions, certainly, but we want to be sure that any commitments made by the administration to the Congress and the chairman of its significant committees are fulfilled and, if there are misunderstandings, to be sure that those misunderstandings are worked out before we move forward.

I assure the gentleman that we will be encouraging in that discussion and facilitating it in every way that we can so that it moves forward at the quickest possible time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that information.

I will ask one more question on the intelligence issue. Does the gentleman know whether the administration is supportive of the position taken by the chairman of the Intelligence Committee and the ranking Democrat on the Intelligence Committee or not? Has the administration taken a position on that?

□ 1330

Mr. BLUNT. I do not know what their position on that is. Again, I am most concerned that we be sure that we understood our positions when commitments were made when that bill was passed that created the National Intelligence Director's position.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman.

Lastly, we just had a vote on the privileged resolution that was offered by the Democratic leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI). That resolution, as you know, sought to try to move the ethics process forward so the Ethics Committee could do its work. Hopefully, all of us believe that it is very important that the Ethics Committee be able to undertake its work.

I would hope that the majority would take steps to perhaps discuss in a bipartisan way the implementation of

the existing rules which we believe, as you know, require a majority vote for the hiring of a staff director. That is the way it has always been. From our perspective, that is the way it was intended to be. So it would be a bipartisan or, better yet, nonpartisan handling of the responsibility of the Ethics Committee.

I would hope that in the near term, next week and the days thereafter, that we would work together to try to get this moving forward. Because I think it is important to both sides of the aisle, it is important to the integrity of the House, and I think it is important to the American people.

Mr. BLUNT. I would say it would be hard to be more disappointed than I am that this committee has only met once because of continuing concerns. From the point of view of the majority, I am sure it is our view that we removed what we thought were the obstacles of this committee moving forward with its work, only to find that there is another obstacle. And we do need this committee to work, but all sides need to be looking for ways to make the committee work, not to just find the reasons that the committee does not work, which is my view of this. And we clearly want this committee to work, need this committee to work, and I think the majority has made substantial efforts both publicly and privately to create an opportunity where this committee could do its job.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman, and I have no doubt about his sincerity in that desire. I would simply observe that had we had the opportunity to debate the privileged resolution, which really seeks to redress the House's positions, that perhaps we could have explored more broadly the differences that exist as they relate to the staffing of the committee. Both sides apparently believe that they are correct in their interpretation, but hopefully both sides want a bipartisan and not a partisan staff to proceed with its work.

Unless the gentleman wanted to say something, I would yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUNT. I appreciate what the whip has said and would only say that we could vote on this and solve it that way, but I assume that would not present the right solution as well.

Mr. HOYER. I think the gentleman is probably correct, and of course the resolution offered did not resolve the question. We understand that. But I think the gentleman is correct, it would not resolve it any more than the vote on the rules in January resolved the changing of the rules and the feeling that they were not appropriate to provide the context in which we could proceed.

I know that the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) very honestly and sincerely, as I do, wants to see this matter resolved and see the committee move forward so it could become a matter of history and not a matter of

current debate so we can focus on the important issues confronting this country.

I appreciate the gentleman's comments.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, JUNE
13, 2005

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

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. BLUNT. 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 Missouri?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY COMMITTEE
ON RULES ON AMENDMENT
PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 2745, UNITED NATIONS
REFORM ACT OF 2005

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet next week to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 2745, the United Nations Reform Act of 2005. The bill was introduced on June 7, 2005, and referred to the Committee on International Relations which ordered the bill reported yesterday and is expected to file its report with the House tomorrow.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Committee on Rules in room H-312 of the Capitol by 10 a.m. on Tuesday, June 14. Members should draft their amendments to the text of the bill as reported by the Committee on International Relations. Members are advised that the text of the bill will be available for their review on the Web sites of both the Committee on International Relations and the Committee on Rules.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format. Members are also advised to check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

EXPRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF
IMMEDIATELY REOPENING THE
FAMOUS BEARTOOTH ALL-AMERICAN
HIGHWAY

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure be discharged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 309) expressing the importance of immediately reopening the famous Beartooth All-American Highway from Red Lodge, Montana, to Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, although I am not going to, I would like to sincerely thank the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO) of the Committee on Resources and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am sincerely grateful that they were willing to move this through on a unanimous consent as quickly as possible.

A crisis has occurred in Montana one more time. It seems like it is feast or famine for us. We were just going into our eighth year of drought, no rain, well beyond the opportunity to recover. And the prediction was it was going to take as much as 16 feet of snow in the mountain to get us caught up in the moisture. We began getting the rains and, unfortunately, the next thing that happened were mudslides closing off the Beartooth Pass.

Some Members might remember the Beartooth Pass was considered to be the crown jewel on the part of Charles Kuralt. As he traveled around the 50 States, he made the determination that of the 50 States that was the most beautiful part of the entire Nation. I am sure there are a lot of Members in this audience that might object to that definition. But if you look at the recorded list that he put together, the Beartooth Pass was something special.

Feast or famine in that area is nothing new. Cooke City, unfortunately, was the site of the 1988 fires in Yellowstone Park. Unfortunately, a forest fire came down within hundreds of feet of the community. They were able to withstand that economic devastation. This is going to create another economic devastation.

The detour that is going to be required to get to the community of Cooke City until this road is reopened probably is about the size of Illinois by the time you get around that detour. It is not just like taking a different route. It is like taking several different States. I know my colleague, the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN), and my colleagues, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. OTTER), know the importance of Yellowstone Park to the