minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, a study here in Washington by Legg-Mason recently reported that we are about to become a Nation of haves and have-nots in the worst way. That report says that as long as 3 years into the next millenium, one-half of America will still be deprived of high-speed digital Internet access.

That means that for half of America, our families, our businesses, will not have access to the Information Age, while the other half of America will have good, competitive service. Guess who is left out? Rural America, the poor, the impoverished parts of our country. It means that for half of America, they will either have a single monopoly provider or no provider at all.

Why? Because of old laws that still exist on the books to regulate long-distance and local phone companies. Those old laws restricting competition in those areas are going to hold back the deployment of high speed to half of America.

Members should try to explain to a business in their district, if they live in rural America, like I do, that has to shut down because it cannot get access to the Internet. Explain to a family that cannot get their children educated that they did not do anything about it.

It is time to change those old laws and to end this system of haves and have-nots in America.

□ 1030

WE HAVE REACHED THE PROMISED LAND, FOR NOW

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, we have reached the promised land for now. The Federal Government, for the first time, the first time since 1960, balanced its budget in the just-ended year without tapping Social Security. The Congressional Budget Office reported that yesterday.

Now, this is very, very important. Those people who paid their money into Social Security in the form of taxes now can realize that they are protected, they are secure. Quote, ''We stopped the raid on Social Security. There is no going back,'' end quote. That is what our leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), said. And this is what Robert Reischauer of the Brookings Institution said, ''In a sense what we have done is we have reached the promised land and it will become an issue of who lost the promised land.''

Republicans are committed. Stop the raid on Social Security.

WHEN WILL H.R. 1 BE DELIVERED TO THE HOUSE?

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

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inquire when are we going to get H.R. 1 delivered to this House? When I arrived here in January, one of the things we did out of respect for the administration was reserve H.R. 1 for the President's plan on Social Security. It is now the middle of October, and the President's plan is still absent.

When can we expect the delivery of H.R. 1 from the administration?

FIRST EVER CLEAN AUDIT OPINION OF U.S. HOUSE FINANCIAL RECORDS

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, when we drafted the Contract with America in 1994, we promised to conduct public audits of the House books and records, but in 1995 PricewaterhouseCoopers could not even render an opinion. The records, and I should say the lack of records, were deplorable. Millions of dollars were tracked on handwritten ledgers with numbers scratched out and written in different ink colors. Supplies and equipment were purchased without competitive bidding. There was $14 million in over-budget spending. There were problems with the post office and the House bank.

After a great deal of work to clean up the mess and start keeping records under the guidelines of general accounting principles, this fall we received a totally clean bill of financial health. For the first time ever, the House books are clean, open to the public, and follow those principles.

We are committed to the highest standards of integrity and full accountability to taxpayers, including balancing the budget without using the Social Security trust fund surplus.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2561, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 326, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 326

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2561) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, 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 (Mr. LAHOOD). The gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. MYRICK) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose 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 may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Committee on Rules met and granted a normal conference report rule for H.R. 2561, the Fiscal Year 2000 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. The rule waives all points of order against the conference report and against its consideration. In addition, the rule provides that the conference report shall be considered as read.

This should not be a controversial rule. It is a type of rule that we grant for every conference report that we consider in the House.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday's military coup in Pakistan was a reminder to all of us that we live in an unstable world. We cannot ignore national defense. This appropriations bill, as well as the defense authorization bill which the President recently signed into law, is a strong step forward as we work to take care of our military personnel and provide for our national defense.

We have a long way to go, but H.R. 2561 fully funds a 4.6 percent military pay raise so that we can get some of our enlisted men and their families off of food stamps. It provides $1.1 billion more than the President requested for the purchase of weapons and equipment and it sets aside funding for a national missile defense system so that we can protect ourselves from terrorist nations.

This is a good bill. I urge my colleagues to support the rule and to support the underlying conference report, because now more than ever we must improve our national security.

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

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule and this conference report; but, first and foremost, I rise in support of the men and women who serve the Nation faithfully, as well as members of our armed services. They are the ones who, when called upon, will be required to sacrifice their lives so that we may continue to live in freedom; and this conference report, Mr. Speaker, fulfills a commitment to them which I am proud to support.

Mr. Speaker, this conference report contains a package of pay and retirement improvements which keeps faith with our men and women in uniform. This conference report contains the largest military pay raise in 18 years, as well as funding for a change in pay scales and a series of pay and bonus incentives. These pay increases, bonuses, and other incentives prove our commitment to a better quality of life for our military personnel and their families.