

On Tuesday, we will consider a number of bills under suspension of the rules, a list of which will be distributed to Members' offices. Members should note that we do not expect any recorded votes before 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12.

On Wednesday, May 13, and Thursday, May 14, the House will meet at 10:00 a.m. to consider the following legislation:

H.R. 3494—The Child Protection and Sexual Predator Punishment Act of 1998;

H.R. 3534—The Mandates Information Act of 1998;

H.R. 10—The Financial Services Competition Act of 1997; and

H.R. 2431—The Freedom from Religious Persecution Act of 1998; and

H.R. 512—The New Wildlife Refuge Reauthorization Act.

Mr. Speaker, we hope to conclude legislative business for the week on Thursday, May 14. The House will not be in session on Friday, May 15.

I would like to take this opportunity to note that we will have a lot of important legislation on our plate next week. It may be necessary to work late on Wednesday evening in order to ensure a reasonable getaway time on Thursday.

□ 1545

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. COBURN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BONIOR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FOX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOX addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BENTSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BENTSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES PETER THOBÆ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADY. Today, Mr. Speaker, America lays to rest an excellent journalist and a better father. It was with great sadness that the friends of Charles Peter Thobæ learned that he had passed away Monday, May 4, in Houston, Texas.

A journalism graduate of Boston University, Charles was a reporter with the Houston Chronicle for 11 years and an editor of the Texas Churchman for 25. Believing in faith and his community, he served on various charitable boards and was a very active member of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church.

During his 40 years in public relations, he did free-lance writing, including traveling, writing, and op-ed pieces for both the Houston Post and the Chronicle. Recently, Charles Thobæ also reviewed books for the Chronicle, specializing in contemporary history, military affairs, and sometimes thrillers.

David Langworthy, who is the Chronicle's Outlook editor, remarked, "He had an eye for the human and the personal. He was able to put those personalities into prose that brought our readers insights that were valuable."

His family is a special one. He was born December 9, 1930, in New Rochelle, New York, to Kathryn and Albert Thobæ. He is survived by his beloved wife, Miriam Banks Thobæ; his beloved daughters, Frances Kathryn, Sarah Banks, and Carol Ellen Thobæ. He is also survived by his mother, Kathryn Thobæ of Dennis, Massachusetts.

His daughter, I have had the pleasure of working with her in my congressional office. She recently said of her father, "He remained dedicated to people, the literary world, and religion his whole life. Everybody who knew him loved him, and he made a profound impact on everyone's life."

We celebrate his life and mourn his passing today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, today is the National Day of Prayer. This Nation and each of us individually would be far better off if we all spent more time in prayer. There are very few people in this country who would disagree with that.

Certainly our Founding Fathers believed in prayer. Most of them came here in large part to get freedom of re-

ligion, not freedom from religion. Yet, beyond a belief in prayer, many other issues of faith are very contentious. But there is more common ground than the vocal minority sometimes would have us believe.

Three or four years ago, William Raspberry, the great Washington Post columnist, wrote a really outstanding column on some of these issues. He asked a very important question, Mr. Speaker, when he wrote, "Is it not just possible that antireligious bias, masquerading as religious neutrality, is costing this Nation far more than we have been willing to acknowledge?" Let me repeat that quote from William Raspberry, "Is it not just possible that antireligious bias, masquerading as religious neutrality, is costing this Nation far more than we have been willing to acknowledge?"

In this same column, Mr. Raspberry then told of a Jewish talk show host who had said that for those who thought there was no place for God in the public life of this Nation, he wished they would ask themselves this question: If they were walking late one night in the roughest section of one of our Nation's largest cities and they heard footsteps approaching rapidly from behind and they turned and saw four strapping, well-built young men, would they not be relieved to know that these young men were just returning from a Bible study?

We open up every session of the House and Senate with prayer; and we have rabbis, priests, ministers from all faiths and there has never been a problem about it. Yet, for some reason, we do not allow our schoolchildren the same privilege. And the problems of the schools have grown much worse over the last 25 or 30 years.

A really fine column on religious tolerance, Mr. Speaker, was written a few weeks ago by nationally syndicated columnist Charley Reese. I would like to read this column into the RECORD at this point.

This is what Mr. Reese wrote:

Want to know the definition of a stone-cold bigot? It is anybody who is offended by the sight and sound of someone practicing, expressing, or proclaiming his religious faith. Such people are not only bigots, they are the south end of a horse traveling north. Their intolerance is exceeded only by their ignorance of the Constitution.

The first amendment forbids the establishment of an official church or religion. Period. Nothing else. To establish an official church or religion would require legislation so designating it, and taxes and appropriations to subsidize it. That's all THOMAS Jefferson meant when he said there was a wall of separation between church and state.

Mr. Reese continued:

But when a private individual or a public official prays in a school or any other public place, he is not establishing an official church. For someone to say that the mere sight of a Christian proclaiming his faith in a public place is offensive is to indict himself as a vicious bigot and an inconsiderate, self-centered boor. These boors apparently have no conception of civility and respect for others. They act as if religious faith were an infectious disease.