

in fact, fund some of the critical things that America needs. NIH research has been on hold for the last 5 months. Extramural grants have not been given. But this is the worst process I have seen an appropriation bill put to in my 22 years in this House.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remaining time.

People listening to this proceeding, watching this proceeding may be kind of scratching their heads and saying, well, why are the Republicans not saying anything about this bill? Why are they just sitting over there? Could it be that they are ashamed of this process? Could it be that they have no way of defending what has happened here?

Normally, on a major piece of legislation, each side takes its 30 minutes. Apparently the Republicans simply want this to slip as quietly through as possible, knowing that this is an indefensible process and that they have done things that no one has done in the past, and I hope that even they will not do in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to vote against the rule. I will join Members on our side who will be voting "yes" on final passage, because we do need to make sure the government can operate, and there are important things in this bill. It is just regrettable that the House was denied the opportunity to work its will on so many pieces of the appropriations legislation during this fiscal year.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, I find that the arguments that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were using were interesting arguments. They were based on the whole process of what we are supposed to do here in the House, or in the Congress. They, of course, only mentioned what they wanted to mention that would enhance, presumably, their position; but they forgot one very, very important part, step in this whole process, and that is the adoption of a budget which, of course, is a blueprint that all of our appropriators have to go through on all of the 13 spending bills.

Now, by law, by law, that budget has to be passed by both Houses in the spring, which meant that the budget should have been passed last spring. We did pass it in the House. The other body, with the same majority here as our minority, did not pass the budget. So we had no blueprint. And we know that we have to give and take as we go through this whole thing. So that was never mentioned whatsoever on the other side about the process. That made it very difficult; it would have made it very difficult had we passed appropriation bills over to the other body to try to reconcile when we have no blueprint as to where we are supposed to be spending.

So that was left out conveniently by my colleagues when they were talking.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said in my opening remarks, this has been a long, difficult process. I said in my opening remarks that there are some good things in it, a lot of good things in it; and there are a lot of bad things, and we will hear about that. But in the end, we have to get on with the business of the people; we have to put '03 behind us so that we can start with '04. And I am certainly going to be one Member who is going to work as hard as I can with both sides of the aisle to make sure that we have a budget this year. I hope the other body has a budget. And I hope that we can pass the appropriation bills in a timely manner, because we do not know what is going to be ahead of us in this year with all of the challenges that face us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.J. Res. 2, and that I may include tabular and extraneous material.

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

There was no objection.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.J. RES. 2, CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS RESOLUTION, 2003

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the rule just adopted, I call up the conference report on the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 2) making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2003, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 71, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see proceedings of the House of February 12, 2002, Part II.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start my brief comments on this bill to say, "wow." We are finally here. And some of the complaints that we heard about how we got here are very legitimate, and the process was not the best, but we are finally here, and it is important

that we get this bill off the deck, because fiscal year '04 is already descending upon us.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to pay a strong compliment and tribute to the members of the Committee on Appropriations on both sides of the aisle who really worked hard to get us where we are today, and so we can conclude our work for fiscal year '03. All of the members of the subcommittees were involved at their levels, we had a very open process, we exchanged information and ideas and facts and details with each other as we went through the process. I would compliment the staff who worked many, many long hours; and as it was suggested, some of this bill was not written until 5 o'clock this morning, and I know that, because I was here at 6 o'clock this morning to file the bill, and joined my colleagues on the Committee on Rules at 7 o'clock to get a rule on this bill.

So what led us up to here, we should all be happy that it is behind us. Now we are in a position to close out fiscal year 2003, and I hope that is what we will do.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring this conference report on the consolidated appropriations bill for fiscal year 2003 to the House. This is an important appropriations bill. It not only includes 11 appropriations bills, and that is why the stack is so high and it weighs so much, but it also adds additional funding for national defense, national security, homeland security, intelligence activities, and support of our troops in Afghanistan.

□ 1715

It is an important defense bill, a homeland defense bill, and an antiterrorism bill. It is a must-pass bill. It includes funds for our troops in Afghanistan, our intelligence agencies, homeland security, law enforcement, first responders, education programs and many other important operations of our government. It includes money for election reform, something that has been very important to the Members of the House.

I am sure this bill will not please everyone in all respects, and I do not know of any bill that we bring to the floor that does. But it does address many important needs of our country. Most importantly for the Congress, it preserves one of our most basic and important responsibilities under the Constitution: to appropriate funds from the Treasury. The passage of this bill will allow us to focus on the year ahead as we begin to provide funds for the government for the next fiscal year.

We have already received the President's budget request for fiscal year 2004, and we expect that very shortly, within the next 10 days to 2 weeks, we will receive a supplemental appropriations request dealing with national security, national defense. I think we have done a good job in holding down spending to appropriate levels.

When the chairman of the Senate committee and myself met with the