

## RULE XXX.

## USE OF EXHIBITS.

**When the use of any exhibit in debate is objected to by any Member, it shall be determined without debate by a vote of the House.**

§915. Objections to use of exhibits.

This rule was rewritten in the 103d Congress (H. Res. 5, Jan. 5, 1993, p. —) to address the use of exhibits in debate rather than the reading from papers. When the use of an exhibit in debate is objected to under this rule, the Chair immediately puts the question on whether use of the exhibit shall be permitted (unless determining a breach of decorum under clause 2 of rule I) (Nov. 1, 1995, p. —; Nov. 10, 1995, p. —; July 31, 1996, p. —, —). The Chair puts the question without debate, and without requiring the objecting Member to state the basis for the objection (Nov. 10, 1995, p. —). As such, an objection under this rule is not a point of order: it may be resolved by withdrawal of the exhibit; that failing, it amounts to a demand that the Chair put to the House the question whether the exhibit may be used (July 31, 1996, p. —). It is not a proper parliamentary inquiry to ask the Chair to judge the accuracy of the content of an exhibit (Nov. 10, 1995, p. —). The Chair has held that a second virtually consecutive invocation of rule XXX, resulting in a second pair of votes on use of a chart and on reconsideration thereof, was not dilatory under clause 10 of rule XVI or clause 4(b) of rule XI (July 31, 1996, p. —).

The earlier form of the rule, originally adopted in 1794 and amended in 1802 and 1880 (V, 5257), addressed reading from papers. It recognized the right of a Member under the general parliamentary law to have read the paper on which the House is to vote (V, 5258), but when that paper had been read once, the reading could not be repeated unless by order of the House (V, 5260). The right could be abrogated by suspension of the rules (V, 5278-5284; VIII, 3400); but was not abrogated simply by the fact that the current procedure was taking place under the rule for suspension (V, 5273-5277). On a motion to refer a report, the reading of it could be demanded as a matter of right, but the latest ruling left to the House to determine whether or not an accompanying record of testimony should be read (V, 5261, 5262). In general the reading of a report was held to be in the nature of debate (V, 5292); but where a report presented facts and conclusions but no legislative proposition, it was read if submitted for action (IV, 4663). Where a paper is offered as involving a matter of privilege it may be read to the House (III, 2597; VI, 606; VIII, 2599), rather than by the Speaker privately (III, 2546), but a Member

§916. History of former rule on reading of papers.

may not, as a matter of right, require the reading of a book or paper on suggestion that it contains matter infringing on the privileges of the House (V, 5258).

The former rule prohibiting the reading of papers in debate was held to apply to the exhibition of articles as evidence or in exemplification in debate (VIII, 2452, 2453; June 2, 1937, pp. 6104-05; Aug. 5, 1949, p. 10859), and the new form of the rule adopted in the 103d Congress (H. Res. 5, Jan. 5, 1993, p. —) marks the modern relevance of that application. While Members may use exhibits such as charts during debate subject to this rule, the Speaker may, pursuant to his authority to preserve order and decorum under rule I (see § 622, *supra*), direct the removal of a chart from the well of the House which is not being utilized during debate (Apr. 1, 1982, p. 6304), or which is otherwise disruptive of decorum.

The reading of papers other than the one on which the vote was about § 917. Earlier practice. to be taken was usually permitted without question (V, 5258), and the Member in debate usually read such papers as he pleased, but this privilege was subject to the authority of the House if another Member objected (V, 5285-5288, 5289-5291; VIII, 2597, 2602; Dec. 19, 1974, p. 41425; Dec. 10, 1987, p. 34669). This principle applied even to the Member's own written speech (V, 5258; VIII, 2598), to a report which he proposed to have read in his own time or to read in his place (V, 5293), and to excerpts from the Congressional Record (VIII, 2597). But, on a motion to lay on the table, a demand for the reading of a paper other than the one to which the motion applied was overruled (V, 5297); and after the previous question were ordered a Member could not ask the decision of the House as to the reading of a paper not before the House for action (V, 5296), even though it be the report of the committee (V, 5294, 5295). For further discussion, see §§ 432-436, *supra*. The consent of the House pursuant to the former form of this rule for a Member to read a paper in debate only permitted the Member seeking such permission to read as much of the paper as possible in the time yielded or allotted to that Member, and did not necessarily grant permission to read or to insert the entire document (Mar. 1, 1979, p. 3748). Where a Member objected to another's reading from a paper the Chair put the question without debate, and it was not in order under the guise of parliamentary inquiry to debate that question by indicating that the objection was a dilatory tactic (Dec. 10, 1987, p. 34672).

## RULE XXXI.

### HALL OF THE HOUSE.

The Hall of the House shall be used only for the legislative business of the House and for the caucus meetings

§ 918. Use of the Hall of the House.