(Mr. MINGE 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 Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CASTLE 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 New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE 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 Virginia (Mr. BATEMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

REGARDING STATEMENTS BY CHAIRMAN HYDE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today the distinguished chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary held a press conference in which he made announcements which I had, until I read the report, known nothing about. There are comments here that I think require us to examine this quite carefully.

First of all, the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) has indicated his intention to vote for an inquiry of impeachment of the President of the United States, quite within his scope of his duties, or any other Member, for that matter. But to suggest that Democrats ought to vote in the committee along with him to show bipartisanship I think stretches the bounds of reasonableness to a breaking point.

Every Member in this body has their own responsibility and inquiry within themselves to determine, especially on the Committee on the Judiciary, whether or not there should be an inquiry.

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The fact that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) has decided that there should be, should not influence anybody else in this body. For him to suggest that Democrats should show bipartisanship by voting with him is, indeed, an incorrect position which I hope he will repair immediately tomorrow.

I just left his office, and he was not there. The office was closed. But one of his staffers was nice enough to inform me that I am on his schedule to meet with him tomorrow.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) cannot dictate what the Committee on the Judiciary's Members, 21 Republicans and 16 Democrats, are going to vote a week from now. He cannot do it. Neither can I. Neither can the Speaker.

To announce to the press unilaterally that that vote will take place a week from today begs common sense. We are out until Thursday. There is a weekend of 2 days. We are supposed to come back on Monday, and the most important vote of the Committee on the Judiciary in its recent history is supposed to happen between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. a week from today. I suggest that is an incorrect way to proceed. It is unilateral. I am reading about it.

When by chance does the committee get a chance to examine the materials for something other than looking for redactions to send out to the American people? We still have not finished. Because we sent over staffers to find out that there are even more boxes in the independent counsel's office in which he said he deemed them irrelevant and of no consequence to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Well, thank you, Mr. Starr. But I think that is within our jurisdiction to make the determination whether anything is irrelevant or not. He sent us 37 boxes. Send it all and let us examine it all.

But let us not be deceived. Going through materials for redactions that may contain 6(e) materials, that is Grand Jury materials that are accorded privacy, or that there may be defamatory materials that will harm innocent Americans, or that women's phone numbers and addresses should be redacted is a completely different matter from examining the materials with an eye to whether or not we should have an inquiry of impeachment.

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

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

THE EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, fiscal year 1998 ends in 3 days, and President Clinton has let cob webs grow on the Export Enhancement Program.

Yes, as our farmer constituents struggle through one of the most devastating downturns in commodity prices our country has seen, our President has sat on $150 million that could have been and should have been utilized to prevent the loss of markets in wheat, wheat flour, vegetable oil, and other commodities.

The 1996 farm bill made over $1.5 billion available for EEP, and this administration has used it to move some frozen chickens and some barley. They should be ashamed.

This administration's trade policy should be called promises made, promises broken. Understanding the need to open new markets for our commodities, the President has promised to utilize EEP to its fullest. This is a promise he has not kept.

In March of this year, I joined my colleagues from Oklahoma in sending a letter to Secretary Glickman outlining our thoughts on the need for the administration to utilize EEP. I would like to read the letter we sent.

Dear Mr. Secretary: It has come to our attention that according to the United States Department of Agriculture . . . February supply/demand report, the season average price for wheat is expected to decline by at least twenty percent compared to the 1996/97 season. This price decline is causing serious concern to our producers, and we strongly urge the Department to use all discretionary programs to strengthen market prices and export opportunities for U.S. producers.

We believe the Department should aggressively utilize export enhancement tools in strategic markets, including the Export Enhancement Program (EEP) and the GSM credit programs. All agree that export growth is fundamental to improved market prices for producers. As we talk it our producers/constituents throughout Oklahoma, they time and time again express great dissatisfaction with the Department's reluctance to use the EEP to counter competitive subsidization of wheat in world markets. The unwillingness to utilize this program has weakened its effectiveness both as a deterrent to unfair trade practices and as a means of gaining access to markets.

As U.S. producers lose market share to a growing list of countries with state trading enterprises, it is imperative that the Department implement a long-term strategy to counter these entities. As you begin the preparation for the next round of World Trade Organization Negotiations in Agriculture, we hope that you will utilize all export tools available.

Thank you for consideration. We are looking forward to your response. FRANK D. LUCAS, J.C. WATTS, JR., ERNEST ISTOOK, STEVE LARGENT, WES WATKINS, and TOM COBURN.

How did he respond? Nearly $50 million a month has sat idly by as our markets have dried up throughout the world as the administration plays partisan politics with the future of our producers. I would argue that one of the main problems plaguing those trying to earn a living off this land is this administration's lack of an agricultural trade policy. Mr. President, this needs to change.

SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY WHILE PROVIDING TAX RELIEF

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I want to echo everything that my distinguished friend, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. LUCAS), just said because that is a very important issue to the farmers and ranchers in my home State of South Dakota.

What I would like to do this evening is just for a few minutes here discuss some things I think are very important to the future of our country as well, and to say that a couple of years ago about this time there was a debate going on in this country over the airwaves about the Republican so-called commitment to destroy Medicare, and we heard over and over on the airwaves, from candidates who were seeking elective office, that this somehow was going to come to pass, and here we are two years later.

Of course, after that, when we came back in January, when those of us who were freshmen came and joined the Congress, and then last summer we passed the balanced budget agreement and believe it or not the plan at that time that was characterized as destroying Medicare then became our plan to save Medicare. A lot of our friends on the other side, who ran campaigns in the fall of 1996 attacking Republican candidates for what they perceived as a plan to destroy Medicare, ended up voting for a plan that then became a plan to save Medicare and actually spent less on Medicare than the very plan that they spent all of 1996 attacking.

Now, I just use that as an illustration to point out some of the hypocrisy that you are going to hear, and I want the American people to listen very carefully to this because the same thing is going to happen again this year. We have already heard it start.

On Saturday, we passed historic legislation to set aside money for Social Security. Ninety percent, or $1.4 trillion, of the projected surplus that will come into this country is going to be walled off and set aside to save Social Security. That is a commitment that we have made.

The balance, the remaining 10 percent, or about $80 billion, is going to be used to bring tax relief to the American people.

Already our friends on the other side have been relentlessly attacking the Republican plan to destroy Social Security, and I just want those who are watching this evening across America, the taxpayers of this country, the people who should care very deeply about this issue, to know one thing. You are going to hear over and over and over again repeated a parade of speakers on this floor in this House, and on the airwaves this fall, about attempts to kill Social Security. I want you to know they are flatly untrue.

What we are trying to do is to save Social Security, not only for the current generation but for generations to come, and that is why we are taking advantage of this historic opportunity to dedicate and set aside $1.4 trillion of that surplus to save Social Security.

What I would like to do this evening is talk about the other 10 percent, and that is those dollars that we have committed to give back to the taxpayer some of their hard earned money. We did it in a way on Saturday with a vote that was historic because it will deliver tax relief to families by relieving the marriage penalty. It will also allow small savers to set aside more in terms of dividends and interest and to protect that from income tax and lessen their tax liability there, but also for the farmers and ranchers of this country, and in my State, who are very near and dear to my heart.

This is such a wonderful plan for agriculture. If we think about the things that are accomplished in this tax relief bill and the problems that we are facing in agriculture today, we have an economic disaster in rural America. We have historically low prices. We have a price crisis, and we need to do everything that we can to help our farmers recover.

We are going to vote upon an ag assistance package later on hopefully this week that will provide some needed assistance out there, but at the same time we can couple that with tax relief that will put some dollars into their pocket.

One of the things that we did is we lessened the death tax and so that those farmers and ranchers who want to pass on their operation to the next generation will be able to do so without facing the undertaker and the IRS at the same time.

We also allow for the deductibility of health insurance premiums for self-employed people, farmers and ranchers and small business people who can benefit tremendously from being able to deduct health insurance premiums that they are paying.

There is a provision in there that makes permanent income averaging for farmers and ranchers who have very volatile income. Some years it is up. Some years it is down. This allows them to spread it out over time and thereby lessen their tax liability.

There is a loss carryback provision that allows farmers who have had losses in the last couple years to offset those losses against more profitable years and therefore get a tax refund this year. There are expensing provisions that they can use again to help them reduce their tax liability.

This is an incredible package for the farmers and ranchers of this country and it is, again, as I said earlier, done in a way that allow us to accomplish tax relief and yet make a long-term commitment to saving Social Security for the future of our country.

These are important provisions in this bill. I was proud to support it. I hope that we can move this bill forward and pass it in the Senate and have the President sign it.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not the viewing audience.

THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF REPRESENTATIVE LEE HAMILTON OF INDIANA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. VISCLOSKY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to stand before the Members of the House tonight in a special order devoted to honoring our colleague, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) who will be retiring from this institution after serving for 34 years.

The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) has had a distinguished career, and I would note that literally, depending on the day the 106th Congress is sworn in next year, Mr. HAMILTON may also hold the historical record of having served in this House longer than anyone else in the history of the State of Indiana.

I am here tonight, and I know my colleagues are here tonight, not because of the quantity of the service of the gentleman from Indiana but the quality of the man and the quality of his service; the quality of his mind, which is exceptional; the quality of his service. He has been selfless every day of those 34 years as far as his commitment to the American people and to those who he has served internationally; and the quality of his person, his ethical conduct, his commitment to his God, to his family and, again, to the people that he has represented in the Ninth District of Indiana.

Seventeen years ago, as a young man, I decided to run for the United States Congress, and at that time the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON) gave me a gift. He gave me the gift of his intelligence and he gave me the gift of his support.

Following my election, 14 years ago, as a Member, the gentleman from Indiana gave me additional gifts: The gift of his patronage in the House of Representatives and the gift of his counsel.

□ 1945

To all of us, he has given the gift of his time, whether as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, where he attempted to ensure that every American had the fairest chance for the best job in the world's strongest economy, whether it was chairing the House Intelligence Committee to ensure that our Nation was secure above all others, or whether it was his distinguished service on the Committee on International Relations as chair and ranking member, where he ensured that the voice of those least fortunate or those most in danger was always heard.

But on a personal note, I must emphasize that what I will miss most about LEE HAMILTON is our extended conversations about the Indiana University football team. I say that simply because LEE was the athlete I never was and never will be and would point out to those who might not know that