

[Mr. SKAGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

SIGNS OF A RECESSION

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, yesterday, the front page of the New York Times reported that some members of the Federal Reserve Board "have publicly expressed concern that the economy is now in considerably worse shape than they had expected."

Two days ago, Washington Post columnist James K. Glassman wrote: "Don't look now, but the recession may already have started."

Mr. Glassman wrote that the White House is going to try to convince voters that this is a Gingrich recession, but then he says this:

Such a charge, of course, is nonsense, and it's hypocritical coming from a President whose budget plan isn't so different from that of his adversaries.

Are we in a recession now? Well, the economy lost 101,000 jobs in May. Single family housing starts are at a 2-year low. Unsold inventories have, in the words of the New York Times, risen sharply.

According to Bridgewater Associates, a respected Connecticut firm that measures the economy, retail sales are wretched and second quarter GDP growth is about minus 0.5 percent.

I have spoken at least twice on this Floor about our tremendous problem of underemployment.

If you talk to any of these college graduates who can only find work in fast food outlets or restaurants, if they can find jobs at all, then you would know what I mean. I am sure they would say we are in a recession.

Like all recessions, though, the average consumer will not notice the full effects of this one until several months after it starts.

Thus most people will not notice this one, according to most economists, until very late this year, but really more probably a few months into 1996.

What is the cause of this new recession, or if not a recession, at least this severe slowdown?

Well, I think most people would agree that our obscene national debt of almost \$5 trillion and our continuing deficits, or losses, of almost \$1 billion a day, are the main problems.

Congressman ARMEY, a PhD economist, says the fault lies with the huge tax increase passed by President Clinton and the Democratic Congress in 1993.

Lending credence to this view is John Mueller, chief economist for Lehrman Bell Mueller Cannon, Inc. The columnist Glassman says Mueller believes there is a lag time of 2 years between actions of the Federal Reserve Board and their effects.

There is also a similar lag time with most major legislation passed by the Congress, too.

Anyone who blames a recession or economic slowdown in the next year or so on Republicans in Congress is either forgetting or ignoring the obvious.

First, most of the real changes passed by the House have not been passed by the Senate or have not been signed by the President. Most of the actions by the House have not even yet taken effect or actually gone into law.

Second, despite all the publicity about so-called spending cuts, none of these will go into effect until the next fiscal year begins in October.

Even then, the cuts do not exceed the growth in some programs, and thus overall Federal spending continues to go up and will do so every year under the most conservative budget that has been proposed.

Obviously our economy is on thin ice. So, what should we do?

First, we need to drastically reduce the Federal regulatory burden. The most conservative estimates are that Federal regulations now cost our economy approximately \$500 billion each year.

Second, we need to bring Federal spending under control, cut our losses completely, and even start paying off our national debt is the only way to really help the economy, and that is with uninflated dollars.

It is ridiculous that we cannot even balance our budget until seven years from now, at the least. If we balanced the budget right now, we would still be spending over \$1½ trillion by just our Federal Government this year. We would not have a lean government, we would still have a fat, sassy government. A strong, active, vibrant government is what we should have for that kind of spending.

Third, we need to overhaul, and greatly simplify and reform our federal tax code. We should greatly downsize and decrease the power and cost of the IRS.

It is just crazy that our Federal tax laws are so complicated and convoluted. I am told that we waste at least \$200 billion a year in time lost and expense incurred in IRS compliance costs, keeping records, filling out forms, and so forth.

Finally, we need to lower taxes at all levels. The average person—not the wealthy, but the average—pays about half of his or her income in taxes of all types, Federal, State, and local, sales, property, income, excise, Social Security, and so forth.

The least efficient, least economical way to spend money is to have Government do it, because there is no real incentive or pressure on Government employees to work hard and/or save money, as there is in the private sector.

Money left in the private sector creates 2 to 2½ times as many jobs as does money turned over to Government.

Times are good now for some people.

But they could and should be good for everyone.

Our country could be booming beyond belief—people could be doing two or three times as good as they are—if we would do the four things I just mentioned: first, deregulate our economy; second, balance our budget and start paying off the national debt; third, greatly simplify our tax code and basically eliminate the IRS; and fourth, lower the tax burden on our people, at all levels, so they can spend their own money wisely instead of having bureaucrats do it wastefully.

We could be booming, Mr. Speaker, but because real change has not yet taken place, there are many signs that we are headed into a recession that has been produced by our own Federal Government.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mrs. KENNELLY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. KENNELLY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. DORNAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DORNAN 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 Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS 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 Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. SCARBOROUGH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, we will soon consider a farm bill that warrants an examination of the history of agriculture and a study of the lessons learned. There is linkage

between the modern American farmer and ancient Sumerian who worked the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Both were responsible, indeed farmers throughout history have been responsible, for their countries and the progress of civilization.

It has been said that in the last reckoning, all things are purchased with food. This was true in the cradle of civilization, and it holds true now.

Today American agriculture is this country's largest industry. Agriculture accounts for a full 16 percent of our current gross domestic product; 355 billion dollars' worth of food and fiber were produced this past year. That is more than any other industry.

And so it is especially important that we learn the lessons taught by the successes and failures of the past. History is awash with the remains of societies that failed to maintain their soil, who let it succumb to erosion, who let the channels that fed it get choked with silt. The ancient city of Babylon, 2,600 years ago developed a productive agriculture. It allowed their civilization to grow to 17 million people and a remarkably diversified society. King Nebuchadnezzar even boasted that because he developed a great productive agriculture the rest of his society excelled. But eventually agriculture and farmers became a lesser priority in that country, and it ultimately failed. Farmers abandoned the farms and eventually the city collapsed.

Another example is the Promised Land of the Sinai Peninsula. Moses called it "the land of milk and honey." Farm production and conservation were neglected and eventually only dregs of fertile soil remain at the bottom of narrow valleys.

But there are also successes. Societies with plans promoting farmers and farming survived and flourished. For the last 1,000 years, farmers in the French Alps with an eye toward conservation have terraced hillsides in a dramatic effort to prevent soil loss, resulting in continuously fertile soil, fertile agriculture, and abundant production.

□ 1830

In this country the Dust Bowl of the 1930's affected over 150,000 square miles of fields in areas of New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado. For 6 years, drought and blinding dust storms were constant. The fertile ground of much of the Great Plains was stripped and deposited in drifts over millions of acres. Farms were buried and families fled. The counties of the Dust Bowl lost nearly 60 percent of their population through migration.

The cause of this ecological disaster was largely the result of an overuse of the land. Following World War I, high grain prices enticed farmers to head for the Plains. But those high prices didn't last. As the wheat prices fell, the farmers became financially stressed and looked for short-term gain by planting more wheat. The long-term advantages

of strip cropping, summer fallow and other conservation measures were abandoned. In fact, by 1930 farmers had planted three times as much wheat as they had in 1920. To a large degree, the extra planting was an act of desperation to survive. Soil conservation suffered.

The drought began in 1933; the overuse made the land vulnerable to the winds that followed in 1934. Farmers continued to harvest what little of their crops they could, often driving their tractors in conditions so blinding that they couldn't see their radiator caps, much less the fields they worked as the fertile topsoil blew away. When wheat prices hit bottom during the Great Depression, more and more farmers abandoned their farms.

In 1933 President Roosevelt started a Federal program to limit production in order to help keep farm prices stable and encourage special farming techniques like contour plowing, crop rotation, and terracing that kept soil on the farm and kept it fertile. However, prices stayed low and poor farmers continued to leave the land. In 1936 the Agriculture Adjustment Administration was created to promote soil conservation by issuing checks to farmers who adopted acreage reductions and wind controls on their farms.

In the United States Congress we're now engaged in a great agricultural debate. We're deciding what proper Federal agricultural policy should be. It is important that the American people understand that agricultural programs had been designed to encourage a continuous but slight over-production. A hidden goal has been to keep enough farmers and ranchers producing so that an abundant supply would result in not only lower food and fiber prices in this country, but exports of low-priced commodities to assist in our balance of trade. Huge stores of grain were held by Government to be sold when farm prices went "too high."

Since the time of the first Dust Bowl we have enticed farmers to become more and more dependent on Government subsidy programs. As we move to a more market-oriented farm policy, it is important that we phase out subsidies smartly. Research and technology is needed to conserve water and topsoil, increase the efficiency of pesticides and fertilizers, and maximize yields. Farmers must ultimately make a profit if they are to continue to produce for today's needs and preserve productive land for tomorrow.

American consumers now spend 9.5 percent of their take-home dollars for food. With that 9.5 percent, they are able to buy the best quality, lowest-priced food in the world. In our haste, we cannot undermine the agricultural base that made our country strong. We must not forget our own history. New Federal farm policy needs to help assure a strong agricultural industry.

REPUBLICANS CARE MORE ABOUT MILITARY CONTRACTORS THAN THOSE WITH THE AIDS VIRUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCKEON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last week my best friend's son died. He was 33 years old, HIV positive, and died from cancer—considered an opportunistic disease related to HIV.

Also last week, this House voted to invest \$9 billion more than the President and the Secretary of Defense wanted, for bombers, missiles, and star wars.

I wonder how my best friend's son would have felt about that if he were still alive today. I wonder how he would have felt had he known that the new Republican majority were going to take money away from AIDS research and put it into wasteful military pork.

Mr. Speaker, what are the values of this body? Where are our priorities? The cold war is over, but we are spending billions of dollars on additional B-2 bombers and Trident D-5 missiles.

The war rages on for AIDS patients and their families, but we are taking their weapons away. Congress has placed an arms embargo on the most vulnerable people in this Nation, all because the Republican leadership cares more about military contractors than those who have contracted the AIDS virus.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL, AND REDUCING THE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. FOLEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to talk about an issue of feeding the hungry in our Nation's Capital. I would like to thank my colleagues for the overwhelming response to our Dear Colleague letter, for the donations of sweet potatoes that were distributed to their office.

I would like to especially thank the gentlemen from Louisiana, CLEO FIELDS and RICHARD BAKER, for their work with the Sweet Potato Council of the United States, who gave each Member of Congress two cans of whole sweet potatoes. Mr. FIELDS and Mr. BAKER generously donated three cases of sweet potatoes for the hungry. The sweet potatoes will be given to D.C. Central Kitchens, a local not-for-profit organization that provides 2,500 meals a day to men, women and children in area shelters and feeding programs.

Over 100 offices of the Members of Congress have donated so far. It has been so successful that we hope to repeat this again. Several offices have donated additional items. Every item is much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my staffer, Jennifer DelVecchio,