FAST TRACK LEGISLATION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S TRADE AGREEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks on fast track legislation this evening, let me congratulate the Fighting Elephants in their victory over the Dunking Donkeys last night in the congressional basketball game. It is a biannual game that we have at Galaudet University, which is the national university for the deaf and hearing impaired. We raise money for that school, and we thank all those on the staff of the Congress and Members who came out. We had over 40 Members participate.

We also thank the Speaker for his participation and for the singing of the National Anthem with the Capital Four. It was a wonderful part of the evening.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk today about fast track. Last spring a little girl from Michigan, named Lindsay Doneth, was rushed to a hospital with a fever of 103. Her lips were bleeding, she was nauseous and she had sharp pains. As Lindsay screamed in agony, her mom and dad sat by her hospital bed unsure whether their 10-year-old would live or die.

Doctors said Lindsay had contracted hepatitis, a potentially deadly blood disorder. And she was not alone. Area hospitals were being flooded with her classmates from Madison Elementary School. Fortunately, Lindsay and the other students survived the outbreak. Today she and her classmates are back in class. As it turns out, all 179 of them had eaten contaminated Mexican strawberries in the school cafeteria.

Now, I tell this story today because it relates directly to the most important issue Congress is now debating: Fast track and the future of America's trade agreements.

Now, some might ask, well, what is the connection here? What do Mexican strawberries and sick children in Michigan have to do with our Nation's trade policies? Absolutely everything. Every day some 10,000 Mexican trucks line up in the sweltering heat waiting to cross into the United States, honking their horns as the traffic barely crawls forward. I have seen it down on the border.

Overburdened customs inspectors have to wave most of them through because they only have time to check about 1 percent. They call this the wave line down there. They just send the trucks on through. So how many go without inspection? More than 3 million trucks a year. Three million.

Unfortunately, under the NAFTA agreement that was signed into law almost 4 years ago, it prevents us from increasing inspections at the border. Under section 717 of that agreement, searching more diligently for pesticides, toxins, parasites and infectious disease could be considered a constraint, or I should say a restraint of trade.

And it is not just tainted food that is slipping into the country. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency, 70 percent of the cocaine entering the United States now rolls across the Mexican border. One former DEA official called NAFTA, and I quote him, a deal made in narco heaven.

Now, I know that some of my colleagues are thinking to themselves and saying, ''There goes DAVID BONIOR again, attacking NAFTA.'' And it is true I have attacked NAFTA over the years, and for good reason, but my remarks this evening are primarily about the future and about how we can avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

I bring the case of Lindsay Doneth and the contaminated strawberries only because it raises a critical issue in this debate on fast track. Will the trade deals we negotiate promote rising living standards at home and abroad or will they lead to a downward spiral of dangerous food, of dirtier environment, and of lower wages and benefits?

Let me emphasize here that I believe cultivating healthy trade relationships is critical to America's future. But our prosperity will depend not just on the quantity but the quality of that trade. That is why we must negotiate strong and sensible trade agreements.

As an analogy I sometimes compare foreign trade with a wild horse. With a bit between its teeth, the reins in our grasp, and a firm sense of purpose, we can harness the power and ride it where we want it to go. But if we fail to assert ourselves, we run the risk of being thrown and trampled and left behind.

And so I pose the following question: Will our trade deals carry us into the future or drag us into the past?

At stake in this debate is nothing less than the safety of the food we eat, the water we drink and the air that we breathe. At stake in this debate is the safety of our factories, the stability of our farms and the economic security of working families everywhere. And at stake in this debate are the very values that give our economy strength and our democracy meaning.

There are those who denigrate such talk. They dismiss it as mere idealism. Almost derisively they ask, are these issues really related to trade? And without a doubt, the answer is yes. The world has changed, and the people who would segregate health and safety and the environmental issues during trade negotiations fail to grasp the new reality of this global economy.

Those pushing fast track see trade only in two dimensions, like the flat dusty pages of an accountant's ledger. Like those who scoffed at Columbus for claiming the Earth was round, they cling to the old notions that no longer apply to a modern world. With a lot of talk about the 21st century, they are pulling us back to 19th century conditions: Lower wages, weaker consumer protections, and a dirtier environment. I call that the past masquerading as the future.

Four years ago, when we debated NAFTA, its supporters made some pretty big promises. And today, as we consider fast track negotiations to expand NAFTA to other countries, it is incumbent upon us to review the impact that that agreement has already had. So let us look at it for a second.

In 1993 NAFTA supporters promised that the agreement would generate hundreds of thousands of new jobs. They were wrong. According to the Clinton administration's own assessment, NAFTA-related exports have generated somewhere between 90,000 and 160,000 new jobs. And they quietly say that the agreement has had a modest positive effect on the U.S. economy.

But those figures do not account for nearly 150,000 Americans who lost their jobs as a direct result of the agreement. That figure comes from the Labor Department, and it only includes those workers who received health under NAFTA's narrow trade adjustment assistance program. Other estimates of NAFTA job-related job losses run much, much higher. The Economic Policy Institute issued a report last month that indicated NAFTA has cost nearly 395,000 American jobs.

Whatever the exact figure may be, the Labor Department found, this is our own Government, they found that two-thirds of Americans who lost their jobs due to foreign trade end up with work that pays less than they earned before. Two-thirds of the people. Now, I do not call that progress. I call that slipping backwards.

In 1993, NAFTA supporters promised that the agreements would generate higher wages on both sides of the United States-Mexican border, and they were wrong. Mexican wages along the border dropped from $1.00 an hour, as abysmal as that is, to 70 cents an hour, according to the International Monetary Fund. And tragically that is despite the fact of a 26-percent increase in Mexican productivity over the past 3 years.

So the Mexican workers are working harder, they are producing more, they are more efficient, things are increasing by 26 percent, and they are getting paid 70 as opposed to a dollar when NAFTA was first established.

All this is putting downward pressure on wages here in the United States, affecting our own workers. Last year a Cornell University study found that 62 percent of U.S. companies have used the threat of shutting their doors or moving abroad to hold down wages and cut back benefits and undermine collective bargaining here at home.

Now, imagine that. Sixty-two percent of our companies go to the bargaining table with their workers and say, listen, if you do not take a cut in

wages, if you do not take a cut in benefits, we will shut the doors, or we are moving south to Mexico.

One Michigan factory even loaded an entire assembly line on a flatbed truck, put it in front of the company with a sign that read, ''Mexico transfer jobs.'' The workers got the message very soon, and soon they dropped their push for union representation and a better contract. So it is intimidation, not good faith bargaining, and that apparently has become the coin of the realm.

In 1993, the NAFTA supporters promised the agreement would help boost American exports. United States exports to Mexico have risen. But what NAFTA supporters will not tell us is that most of these are what we call revolving door exports. They come in, they come right back out. United States components sent to the maquiladora factories along the United States-Mexican border for a quick assembly by low wage workers, with no protections and no environmental protections, and immediately shipped back to the United States. They are not even there long enough to have a visa, if they were required to have one. They are just shipped, assembled and right back here.

Dr. Harley Shaiken, an economist at the University of California at Berkeley, found that such exports represented more than 60 percent of the products we shipped to Mexico last year. That is up by half from 1993. And our trade balance? Worse than ever. In 1993 we enjoyed a $2 billion trades surplus with Mexico. That is right before NAFTA. Four years later, after it passed, that surplus has become a $16 billion deficit. I do not call that progress. I call that slipping backward.

NAFTA, which was negotiated on a fast track, has been a self-destructive trade policy. It is one that enriches the economic elites and leaves working families poorer on both sides of the border.

Now, is this really, is this really the model that we want to replicate elsewhere in Latin America and throughout the world? Is fast track a process that we should repeat?

Let us take a closer look at the food safety issue.

Last week, and I encourage anybody who has not seen it, front page of the New York Times, they reported a dramatic rise in disease linked to imported foods, especially fruits and vegetables. Evidence suggest Lindsay Doneth and her Michigan classmates are but a few of the victims of poisoned produce.

In 1996, thousands of Americans fell seriously ill after eating tainted Guatemalan raspberries. The fruit was apparently contaminated with a parasite living in the water used to irrigate the fields. But when an American inspector informed the Guatemalan growers of the problem, the growers got angry. They banished our inspectors and accused the United States of trumping up the health issue as a way to protect California berry growers.

Gabriel Biguria, a leading Guatemalan exporter, called the United States complaint, and I quote, ''a very dangerous tool for protectionism.'' So when we stand on the side of making sure our kids do not get poisoned because they are eating contaminated vegetables or fruits, we are a protectionist. He said that protectionist forces find bugs or whatever to protect their market. It is a commercial war.

Now, I wish I could say that Guatemalan raspberries were the only threat to our health, but they are not.

□ 1900

Contaminated Peruvian carrots, Mexican cantaloupes, Chinese mushrooms, and the list goes on and on and on. The New York Times also reported that while food imports into the U.S. have doubled since the 1980's, inspections have dropped to less than half of what they were 5 years ago. No, I do not call that progress, I call it slipping backward.

As the former FDA commissioner, someone who has immense respect in his field in this country, and around the world, I might add, David Kessler said, ''We built a system back 100 years ago that served us very well for a world within our borders. We didn't build a system for the global marketplace.''

Because crops are, by necessity, exposed to air and water, the safety of the our food is closely linked to the conditions of our environment. I say ''our environment'' because polluted air and water respect no international boundaries; they do not follow the dotted lines on our maps.

When we debated NAFTA the last time around, its supporters promised environmental cleanup on a massive scale. In order to get the votes, they promised a $2 billion set-aside to clean up toxic sites along the border. Today, not even 1 percent of that fund has been spent and factories there continue to pollute at will.

I have seen the pollution along the border firsthand. I visited a field littered with used batteries. It looked like a moonscape covered in white powder, and lead was leaking into the ground right across from the region's largest dairy farm that served literally millions and millions of people. The cows were grazing not 20 feet from the poisons that cause low IQ's and aggressive behavior in children who drink their milk. I have seen Mexican mothers drinking from the same ditches used to flush out factory waste and domestic sewage. I have seen their children playing and bathing in it. It is no wonder birth defects are common in these slums.

The American Medical Association called the border area that I am describing to my colleagues right now ''a cesspool of infectious disease,'' and for good reason; a full 17 percent of Mexican children get hepatitis from contaminated drinking water.

To paraphrase Edward R. Merrill, this is an industrial harvest of shame along the border, an industrial harvest of shame, people living in subhuman conditions, all under our sanction.

In essence, NAFTA gives multinational corporations a financial incentive to relocate environmental regulations where they are the weakest, to locate where environmental regulations are the weakest. So why adhere to higher standards north of the border when they can move south and pollute with impunity?

When multinationals do this, they are just following the market incentives NAFTA negotiators set up, and then they are passing the hidden cost down to us. This sets off a race to the lowest common denominator. While multinational corporations might be able to avoid pollution standards, you and I will not be able to avoid the pollution that they produce.

That is because, as I mentioned earlier, polluted air and water and food do not stop at the dotted line on the map. We breathe it. We drink it. We eat it. A factory spilling filth in Juarez, Mexico, might as well be located in El Paso, Texas, whose residents breathe the same air and they pump the water from the same river as their Mexican neighbors.

So while the economy may not yet be completely integrated, the global environment surely is. And that makes pollution a bona fide trade issue, one with real economic and human cost. Recognizing that requires us to think about trade in a new way and to develop our trade policy accordingly. Addressing these issues in the so-called side agreements, executive orders, and other measures will not work. That was done during NAFTA, and it has not worked.

Last week the President addressed the issue of food safety by seeking to expand the power of the Food and Drug Administration and increase the number of inspectors. He proposed empowering the FDA to ban produce imports from countries which failed to comply with health standards.

Well, I respect his intent, but I respectfully suggest that such unilateral, reactive action divorced from our trade agreements would not be nearly as effective as a proactive negotiation with our trading partners.

By establishing a minimum standard in our trade agreements, we could work together to prevent potential problems from developing in the first place and avoid rancorous disputes down the line. We must adopt this proactive posture if we hope to preserve the standards of our parents and our grandparents and our great grandparents, the standards that they struggled to establish for us.

Just to review history briefly, and I think it is important to do that, we do not talk about history enough and what our folks did before us. Just remember that, at the turn of the century, industrial accidents were killing 35,000 American workers each year. An additional 500,000, a half million, were being maimed. It took a fire that

claimed the lives of 146 immigrant women locked inside the Triangle Shirt Waste Company to ignite a movement for workplace safety. And we got workplace safety standards.

Today, most Americans take their right to a safe workplace for granted. In the fall of 1913, some 9,000 Colorado miners and their families went on strike for an 8-hour day. To break the strike, the mining companies mounted a machine gun on an armored vehicle and dubbed it ''Death Special'' and sent it rumbling out to intimidate the workers. Fighting broke out. The strikers' tent colony was burned to the ground. Twenty-one people were killed, including 11 children. Today, most Americans take an 8-hour day for granted.

At the turn of the century, unscrupulous meat packers were selling carloads of rotten beef to a powerless public. It took Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel ''The Jungle'' to expose this deadly fraud and spark a movement for food safety.

And I could go on and on and on and talk about the movements, the sit-down strike in Detroit, Michigan, that helped create the unions that brought the largest and most bondable middle class in the history of the world in this country.

I can talk about what happened at Homestead in Pennsylvania with the steelworkers. I could spend 5 hours going over example after example of people who came before us who established with their heart and their guts the standards that we enjoy today, people who bled for, were jailed for, were beaten for, and some died for the rights that we so much enjoy.

Until recently, Americans thought they could shop at a supermarket without worrying about the safety of their food. They are not so sure anymore.

I cite these historical examples because I think it is vital to remember where we come from and the sacrifices previous generations made so that ordinary people might enjoy a decent standard of living.

As we approach a new century, these historic gains are being undermined. They are being undermined by powerful multinationals which have no allegiance to this country or any other, only to the bottom line of their quarterly earnings reports. But just as Teddy Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement rose up against the great industries that stomped like giants across America's economic landscape, we will not permit today's multinationals to trample our rights.

As citizens of the United States, we have a vested interest in developing a trade policy that provides market incentives, responsible incentives, responsible behavior on the part of everybody engaged in international commerce.

Fast-track supporters will argue that the United States cannot expect less developed countries to adhere to our standards. Well, they did not make that argument when they insisted on protections in NAFTA for intellectual property produced by major corporations like Disney and Microsoft. We should protect intellectual property. But we should also insist that Lindsey Doneth gets as much protection as Donald Duck. And right now, that is not the case.

Recognizing this requires us to think about trade in a new way and to develop our trade policies accordingly. I am not arguing that other countries must establish the exact same minimum wage as we have, not at all. But we know, we know from our history, that the living standards we enjoy, the consumer protections we rely on, the freedoms that we cherish, the rights that we claim, they just did not happen, and if we are not careful, they could disappear.

From the American Revolution, to the Civil War, to the battlefields of Europe, to the strawberry fields of Watson, CA, to the factories of Flint, MI, Americans have had to fight for opportunity and justice every step of the way. Nothing has been automatic. This should tell us something, that similar progress outside the United States will not be automatic either.

Unchecked market forces alone did not generate safer food, better wages, or a cleaner environment here in the United States, and unchecked market forces alone will not generate them abroad either. There are brave people struggling today for basic rights throughout Latin America, just as our ancestors fought earlier this century for the rights we enjoy in the United States. Our trade policy should help working people get ahead in life, not keep them mired in poverty as NAFTA does.

It has always taken some constructive countervailing pressure to ensure that free market benefits the broad majority, not just the economic elites. That is what the Progressive Movement at the turn of the century was all about.

Today, as the United States embraces a growing international market, our trade policy must help to provide that countervailing pressure, harnessing economic growth for the benefit of many, not just the few. And that is why we need to negotiate tough trade agreements, trade deals that include strong environmental labor and consumer protections, trade deals that promote prosperity and reflect our commitment to democratic values and a decent standard of living. It is not an either/or choice; we can do both. That choice lies in how we structure our trading relationships. America should be negotiating tough trade deals that harness the power of trade and reflect our commitment to democratic values.

Global trade is here to stay. The question is, what are the rules going to be and who is going to benefit? If we do not stand firm against the international tug of lower standards and lower wages and lower benefits and a dirtier environment, then nobody will. If we do not stand firm, all of us will pay the price and so will generations to come.

America must stand up for what is right, just as we have so many times in the past. We must point the way to the future. We must exercise what they call ''leadership.'' Those who support Fast Track often like to bandy that term about. ''America must be a leader,'' they say.

Well, I agree. But what they are proposing is that America lead a retreat to the past. What they are proposing is a policy that has already failed. What they are proposing leads us in the wrong direction. America needs a trade policy that helps build a better future. Hammering this out with our trading partners will not be easy. But that is what leadership is all about, convincing people of a better direction, not just following the comfortable ruts of the past. Leadership is about standing up for what is right, not about caving in to what is easy.

It would be easy to negotiate trade agreements that surrender hard-fought gains of this century, but that would be wrong. It would be easy to set aside the toughest trade issues for the sake of a quick agreement, but that would be sowing the seeds of our own decline.

Fast Track supporters claim that this process is necessary to land important new trade deals. But the administration has already negotiated more than 200 such deals without Fast Track.

Fast Track supporters claim that that process is essential if the United States hopes to boost trade with South America. But in the past year alone, our trade surplus with South America has doubled to $3.6 billion, far outstripping all of our rivals.

Fast Track supporters claim that this is a philosophical struggle, and they label me and my friends wrongly as protectionists. Well, to them I say, the old argument between protectionism and free trade, that died a long time ago. Ours is the debate about America's capacity to shape the future.

But I will tell them, and I will tell them with pride, that I do believe in protecting the air we breathe, I do believe in protecting the water that we drink, I do believe in protecting Lindsey Doneth and the children of America from unsafe food, and I do believe in protecting the American values that endowed our democracy with direction and purpose and spirit and with meaning.

So, as we approach the 21st century, I refuse to trade these away, on a fast track or any other track. America can do better, and we must do better. With a new progressive approach to foreign trade, one built on our democratic values, we can both honor our history and embrace our future.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my distinct honor to recognize and yield to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PASCRELL], my distinguished colleague,

who has been a real champion on this issue and has been here late into the evening talking about this, educating our colleagues.

The gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PASCRELL] has been a wonderful inspiration. We are just so honored and delighted to have him in the Congress. At this point, I would yield to him.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to discuss a matter of great importance to my district and to the Nation as a whole, the issue of the renewal of fast-track trade negotiating authority. This is first a consumer issue, second a jobs issue, and third a wage issue.

□ 1915

The previous speaker, the distinguished gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR], has clearly defined the parameters of this debate very differently than the administration.

As the debate moves forward, and as supporters and detractors of the measure voice their positions, I rise tonight for the purpose of clarification and to share the conclusions that I have come to regarding this important issue.

The President's measure seeks to extend fast track authority for 8 years. As such, it sets our national trade policy as we approach and then enter the 21st century.

No one doubts the fact that we do live in a global economy and that nations are more interconnected than ever before. No one doubts that if we are to retain our preeminent position in the world, we must lead from strength, both economically and morally.

For me, global leadership in the area of international trade means that fair trade should not be subordinated to the notion of free trade. We must trade with other nations on an equal footing and not sacrifice American jobs to those earning a lower wage, particularly when that nation has not yet achieved our level of social, economic and environmental development.

The proponents of fast track argue that the administration deserves this ability based on what they perceive as a successful NAFTA policy. They point to the creation of 311,000 new jobs. I take exception, and many take exception, to this figure and cite an alternative one documented which states that 600,000 jobs have been lost during NAFTA's first 34 months. In northern New Jersey alone where I live, statistics show that approximately 15,000 jobs have been lost since 1993. Many companies in my district, small machinery, apparel, textile, foot wear, specifically point to NAFTA as the proximate cause of the reduction in their business.

This leads me to my next point. Fast track is about jobs, but just as importantly, it is about consumer safety in areas like imported food; it is about the environment and environmental degradation; about labor rights and the viability of small businesses; and finally, it is about the consumers paying a reasonable price for goods. We should not lower our standards and sacrifice consumer safety and environmental protections and labor rights simply because we subscribe to the notion of free trade, which has proven to be a myth in the last 4 years.

Trade policy needs to be inclusive regarding these important elements, not exclusive. Labor and environmental provisions need to be in the core agreements, not in unenforceable side agreements which put our workers and our jobs at risk and in jeopardy. If we do not lead from the high ground, we will relinquish all that we have accomplished in our long process to achieve the society that we now live in, the greatest democracy in the world.

The argument that this fast track legislation represents forward progress rings hollow to my ears and to many of my colleagues. The facts and figures and anecdotes we are about to discuss will bear this out. We need a forward-looking trade policy, not one that looks backward.

Mr. Speaker, in the very short period of the last 3 years, the consumer in this country is now in a position never before, never before experienced, and that is, imported apparel to the United States of America is now 2.2 percent higher than domestic apparel.

Yet, when we look at these charts, we see that in imported apparel to the United States of America there is a retail market of 55 percent, compared to 50 percent in those domestic goods made here. Yet, when we look down lower to imported goods, only 1 percent of the total picture goes to manufacturing labor. In our chart to my far right, the domestic apparel takes up 15 percent for labor.

How can our workers compete against these figures? And yet, at the same time, our wives and our loved ones go into stores and pay much more for goods that are being paid for and manufactured for literally bowls of rice in certain parts of this world. This is not an open market, this is constriction. This is not helping the American consumer, this is hurting the American consumer. This is not creating jobs, this is hurting jobs in America. We need to stop exporting those jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BONIOR].

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, my colleague makes a wonderful point here. What he is saying is that the wage being paid to workers in other countries to manufacture this apparel is one-fifteenth, if I am correct, of what was being paid to American workers to manufacture the apparel here.

Mr. PASCRELL. That is exactly what I am saying.

Mr. BONIOR. And yet, Mr. Speaker, those products when they come here have a price tag on them comparable to what the prices are here, or even more, so someone is doing very, very well.

Mr. PASCRELL. Very well.

Mr. BONIOR. It is not the worker here, because they are losing their jobs to people who are getting paid less there. It is not the worker there, in Mexico. As I pointed out, their wages have gone from $1 an hour to 70 cents an hour, despite the fact that they are producing 26 percent more. It is not the consumer that is getting the benefit, because the rates they are charging for this apparel are the same or even more when they come in here, so what is going on here?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BONIOR. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman asked the question, and I think everyone knows the answer: Who is making the money? It is certainly not Main Street, it is Wall Street.

The gentleman and I certainly disagree on several issues, but I think people understand, throughout their districts across America, who is making the profits. It is very, very obvious that it is a quick kill, it is a quick buck. And regrettably we have too many people in this Chamber on both sides of the aisle, and in this administration and in past administrations, that are so concerned about their friends on Wall Street, so concerned about some businesses that might make a quick buck, that they forget all of the people that are getting crushed in the meantime.

It is something that concerns me greatly. It concerns me when we have the debate over China MFN, it concerns me when we talk about other countries. It seems to me that in this day and age, everybody is open to the highest bidder.

In a fireside chat F.D.R. made in 1938, he said at the end of his speech, and in the deepest, darkest time of the Depression, he said, ''My fellow Americans, things are bad, but at least we are having a financial crisis and not a spiritual one.''

I would say when we turn our jobs over to the lowest bidder across the world, be it in Mexico or China, or now in the areas that we are talking about going into, that we are having a crisis of the American spirit that F.D.R. warned about 50, 60 years ago. And despite our disagreements on other issues, I thank the gentleman for bringing this very important issue up.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his contribution. I think he has hit it right on the head.

The regrettable part of all this, of course, is that people look at the economy and the unemployment rates today and they say gosh, unemployment rates are down. But as we illustrated in our discussion just this evening, those 395,000 Americans who lost their jobs in the last less than 4 years as a result of NAFTA, according to the Economic Policy Institute, almost 400,000 people, what they did, they found other jobs, most of them, but two-thirds of them found jobs that paid less.

That is what we mean when we talk about downward pressure on wages, downward pressure. Because of the leverage that the multinationals hold over workers, the leverage because they can go to places like Mexico or Malaysia or other places and they do not have to adhere to these environmental standards; they do not have to adhere to any wage and safety laws; all of the things, as I said earlier, our parents and grandparents and great grandparents fought for and that we take for granted today.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, before I yield to my colleagues, I just wanted to bring out something that both of my colleagues have mentioned, and that is in terms of wages. Just today in the papers in New Jersey, and that is in 1990, if one was making in the area of $44,000 to $45,000 a year, since that time, in that 5- or 6-year period that we have the statistics for, one's wages increased $104 in those 5 years. Anything below that, anything below that, and that means a lot of folks in my district, the Eighth District in New Jersey, the losses can be anywhere from $800 to $2,000. Those are astonishing numbers.

Now, we want and believe in trade, but we want our workers and our businesses to benefit. We have redefined the debate very significantly, because this is not labor versus business. Many of those who oppose fast track in my district own businesses and are very conservative, austere business people who are being hurt, and they understand what is going on very well.

So to define this as this against that, we are not going to accept that this time, are we?

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. And if the gentleman will yield again, the numbers, there is such a difference between those two numbers, and I think it illustrates very vividly that we can seek middle ground. I am a conservative, laissez-faire free trader, and yet, that does not mean we have to be dumb.

We can fight for fair trade, but for some reason, if we engage in this debate and say, ''Hey, wait a second, let us just make sure, maybe we will not have a level playing field with Mexico, let us just make sure we can at least get in the game,'' then all of a sudden we are attacked for being an isolationist or a protectionist or having our head in the sand and not understanding the realities of global economics in the 21st century.

I think they are setting up false choices and I think the numbers that the gentleman points out illustrate that vividly. We can find middle ground on an issue like this, but this certainly is not middle ground, this is extremism on the side of just blatantly unfair trade.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] for his comments, and I thank the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PASCRELL].

A SCANDAL-RIDDEN ADMINISTRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. THUNE]. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 45 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the gentleman yielding me some time to discuss some very important issues regarding trade, and we certainly did find some agreement on that issue, and we have found agreement on several other issues.

One area, though, where obviously I have been in disagreement with several friends on the other side of the aisle and that many of us have found disagreement with many of the other Members on the other side of the aisle has to do with some of the horrifying, more horrifying aspects of the current campaign fund-raising scandal that is gripping the White House and actually forcing them to engage in a bunker mentality that is really bringing about some pretty devastating results, and I would say could possibly be causing a constitutional crisis.

□ 1930

I say that because this scandal reaches far beyond the walls of the White House. We found over the past several years, mostly from very astute reporting from The Washington Post and from The New York Times and from other media outlets, print media outlets that had to investigate this because, regrettably, the Justice Department has not been doing the job, we found some very, very shady activities going on between the White House, the Democratic National Committee, the CIA, the FBI, the National Security Council, the INS, possibly the IRS, the Office of the Presidency, the Office of the Vice Presidency, the Commerce Department, the Energy Department, and just about every other administrative agency across Washington, DC.

Mr. Speaker, what is causing a constitutional crisis is the Justice Department's apparent willingness to sacrifice its role as a fair and impartial observer of scandals that are swirling around the White House. In fact, in 1993, a more independent Janet Reno, the Attorney General, talked about the inherent conflict between the Attorney General and the President, saying that it was very hard for these two people to work together in investigations.

Maybe that is why The New York Times wrote just last week that Bill Clinton and Janet Reno could no longer be trusted to investigate these matters. Now we find the President's past chief counsel coming to the Senate this past week talking about these coffees. Now, I think most Americans have heard about the infamous White House coffees where the President would bring in donors, they would have a coffee, then they would sort of get shaken down, they would get the finances, and there would be a fundraiser on Federal property, then they would leave and give the checks to the DNC.

Well, it is very obvious that these were fundraisers. And, in fact, I hardly think there is a reputable member of the mass media or this Chamber that could tell my colleagues with a straight face that they were not fundraisers. But, unfortunately, the White House continues to underestimate the intelligence of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, a headline in yesterday's newspaper talks about Harold Ickes. ''Ickes insists coffees were legal,'' says the headline, ''testifies that the sessions were not fundraisers.'' The article says the following, ''Harold Ickes, the former White House aide who ran the Clinton-Gore reelection campaign, deflected questions from a Senate panel yesterday and insisted that the slew of Presidential coffees that raised more than $26 million were not fundraisers. 'There was no admission charged,' said Ickes. 'There were people who came to the coffees who never gave a dime.'''

Mr. Speaker, this strains all credibility. We know that $26 million was raised at those coffees. We also know that there is a Democratic Senator who, after investigating this, said that, yes, we Democrats have to admit that at least 103 of those coffees were fundraisers. Over 100 of the coffees were fundraisers. A Democratic Senator admits on the investigating panel, and yet Mr. Ickes claims with a straight face that these were not fundraisers.

There was a memo to the President of the United States talking about these fundraisers, explaining how they needed to have fund-raisers, more coffees, explaining how they needed to sell access to the Lincoln bedroom through fundraisers. Mr. Speaker, despite that, despite the fact that the President signed off on those memos approving fundraising coffees and fundraising sleepovers at the White House, they still come to us with a straight face and say they were not fund-raisers. How stupid do they think the American people are?

I think most telling though, and I am going to ask the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. SOUDER] for some clarification here, perhaps most telling is the fact that we had a White House that obstructed justice, in my opinion, and in the opinion of many other people, by refusing to turn over tapes that they had in their possession for 7 months.

Mr. Speaker, it is a tape scandal, and it smells an awful lot like the Watergate tape scandal of 20 years ago. But it is a tape scandal where they were asked to turn over the evidence, they claimed they did not have the evidence, just like the First Lady claimed she did not have billing records on