minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, one film which earned an Academy Award nomination for best picture more than 10 years ago featured Harrison Ford whose character went to the aid of an Amish family after they had become entangled in a brutal crime. The film, Witness, was fiction, but it taught us what we can learn from communities like the Amish. It is a sad fact, however, that these colonies are often the targets of scorn and ridicule.

In my home State of Montana there are similar religious-based colonies known as Hutterites. What has happened to one of them in recent weeks is outrageous.

The FBI has been asked to investigate a fire which was deliberately set in the timber supply of a new Hutterite colony in Montana. Damage is estimated at $100,000.

There have been other attempts to harass colony members, which is equally disturbing.

Mr. Speaker, Montanans will not stand for these sorts of hate crimes. We welcome people of all religious backgrounds with open arms, and I urge Federal officials to use all means at their disposal to assure the safety and the welfare of these citizens. It is the very least we can do.

Mr. Speaker, I include the following for the RECORD:

[From the Billings Gazette, Mar. 23, 1998]

FBI ASKED TO INVESTIGATE HUTTERITE FIRE

BLAZE DELIBERATELY SET, FIRE OFFICIALS SAY; HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS DESCRIBE INCIDENT AS HATE CRIME

Ledger (AP)—Fire officials say a blaze in a lumber shed at a fledgling Hutterite colony in north-central Montana was arson, and it may be a hate crime aimed at the religious sect.

The fire two weeks ago charred lumber intended to build housing at the new Camrose Colony, near Ledger in southeastern Toole County. Investigators say the fire was clearly arson.

The fire took 13 hours and 38,000 gallons of water to extinguish. Damage was estimated at about $100,000.

Toole County Sheriff Vern Anderson said the fire appeared to be an attempt to intimidate colony members, who have bought several farms in the area within the past few weeks.

''It appears that we've got somebody disgruntled that the colony people have purchased that property,'' Anderson said. But he shied from describing the fire as a hate crime.

''Those are some of the words that are floating around here,'' Anderson said: ''It's hard for me to say.''

The Montana Human Rights Network is less reticent.

''It's got a lot of the classic elements of a hate crime,'' said Christine Kaufmann. The network's research director, ''A group that is different in some way is singled out in the community. It seams to be clearly an effort to prevent them from establishing a colony in the area.''

The fires and a spate of vandalism, including damage to vehicles and grain bins, have left colony members shaken.

''We just took it over about three weeks ago,'' said Joe Waldner, a spokesman for the East End Colony near Havre, which is splitting and establishing Camrose.

The Havre-area colony acquired several area farms, about 8,500 acres, south of the Marias River. The plan is to grow grain and raise livestock ''a few cattle, a few hogs and some chickens,'' Waldner said.

The value of the building materials lost in the fire totaled about $70,000. Waldner says the damage to the building itself probably tops $30,000.

The loss will slow building at Camrose, but it won't alter the long-range plan.

''We are just going to keep on going,'' Waldner said, ''We hope the police catch the guy who did this.''

So do a number of neighbors.

''I don't like what happened up here,'' said Karl Ratzburg, whose property adjoins the colony. ''I hope they find these people and prosecute them for what they did.''

The sheriff said his deputies continue to check leads on the arson, and he notified the FBI of the incident. The FBI declined comment on any involvement on its part.

Kaufmann, the network's research director, has written the FBI and U.S. Attorney Sherry Matteucci asking the agency to actively investigate the colony fires.

Margie MacDonald, executive director of the Montana Association of Churches, said she hoped residents in the area will rally behind the colony.

''We are real concerned about the magnitude of violence up there.'' MacDonald said, ''Arson of any sort is pretty appalling.''

MacDonald said she hopes area pastors will work to develop a community response to the colony crimes, which seem to be rooted in religious intolerance. Pastors were a key part of the strong backlash against hate crimes that targeted Jewish families in Billings in 1993, she noted.

''What we hope to see is some strong community response.'' MacDonald said. ''People really can't be silent when something like this happens.''

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

WASTED MONEY ON IRRELEVANT INVESTIGATIONS

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Committee on House Oversight is expected to give $1.3 million to the House Committee on the Judiciary for an enlarged congressional staff to investigate President Clinton. The American people are tired of this waste, and so am I, and this is from a leadership that promised to trim congressional staffs.

□ 1800

Now, what is amazing to me is the exchange between the chairman, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HENRY HYDE), myself, and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) only 1½ hours ago in the Committee on the Judiciary, when I explained that I thought we needed no more wasted dollars and harassment of the President.

The chairman of this committee, in session, sought to reassure me that the monies would be used for harmless oversight of the Department of Justice and for the noncontroversial reauthorization of the Department. It is on the record in the committee. This is in direct contradiction to the written statement yesterday of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) in a letter that has come to my attention that he has sent to the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), chairman of the Committee of House Oversight, to justify this new windfall by saying that new investigators were needed to recycle and duplicate nearly every independent counsel investigation into the Clinton administration, from fundraising to allegations at the Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior. These matters have already been overinvestigated, but they directly contradict the purpose for which these funds are being authorized by the committee.

I have never received a letter about this in my career. This is a unilateral Republican action to which I take total exception. There has been stealth in correspondence, there have been internal contradictions. But I must now come to the House and report that the Republican leadership is planning to surreptitiously commence to staff for an impeachment investigation without any notice to the Congress, to the Democrats on the Committee on the Judiciary, or to the American people, without a vote from the House of Representatives.

I urge the gentleman from Georgia (Speaker GINGRICH), with all respect, to rethink this dangerous, radical political strategy. It is outrageous that we are being told publicly one thing by the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) when his letter to his own leadership is saying something else entirely different: More money to investigate the President.

Why can the majority not just admit it, rather than hiding under these cloaks and misstatements. Members of the House will get no opportunity to vote on this massive increase of funds. When I explained that the Speaker agreed with this request in a cover letter, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) asked that he not be saddled with the Speaker's words.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I will release to the press the words of the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) justifying this new congressional surplus of money and staff and resources, and let the American people judge for themselves.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CONYERS. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts, the ranking subcommittee chairman.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member, and I think he is performing a very important service.

I know as the second ranking minority member that neither he, I, nor any other Members have been consulted. We have read a lot in the paper about what the Committee on the Judiciary was going to do, what it would not be allowed to do, how it was going to be bypassed.

To have this funding request come forward, it is over a $1 million, some of which would be presumably assigned the minority, with no consultation is a problem. And the problem is compounded because the chairman of the committee did say there would be consultation, but the consultation he discussed was on a subject that appears to be different.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. RIGGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

CONFUSION SURROUNDING REQUEST OF COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, the point is that the justification that the chairman mentioned, the consultations that have been held with staff of the minority and the majority, apparently are irrelevant to the request tomorrow.

So I would hope, and I would think the ranking minority member would agree with me, that we could get the Committee on House Oversight to hold off voting this kind of money until there could be a public hearing.

There appears to be a fundamental confusion, at best, about $1.3 million. Is it money that is to redo the investigation of the independent counsel? Is it money to check up on whether the Attorney General has appropriately dealt with the independent counsel? Or is it for the reauthorization of the Justice Department?

What the chairman told us today was one justification, but the letter that he and the gentleman from Georgia (Speaker GINGRICH) sent to the chairman of the committee is entirely about something else. We ought not to have $1,300,000 so casually used.

We also ought to stop what appears to be a two-track operation in which the ranking minority member is told one thing about the operation of the Committee on the Judiciary when other conversations are going on. There is a partisan tinge to this which is inappropriate when dealing with the most significant things we can deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, here is what the justification submitted to the Committee on House Oversight said: ''The Committee on the Judiciary contemplates an investigation of the Department of Justice's investigation, with an emphasis on the need for an independent counsel.''

They go on to point out that the 17 Republican members have written a letter to the Attorney General and that their plans include the following: The Department of Justice Public Integrity Section and Campaign Fundraising Task Force has been plagued with conflicts of interest, et cetera. In the Chippewa casino matter the Department of Justice is acting as the criminal prosecutor.

Further on, the fundraising investigations, the last time the Committee on the Judiciary sought an appointment of an independent counsel was on the Health Care Task Force.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would allow me, as he is making clear from reading this, nothing in here deals with the ongoing responsibilities of the Department of Justice, which was the stated purpose for this funding from the chairman. Maybe the chairman thinks it is for one thing and the Speaker is, to use his phrase, saddling him with another purpose.

There ought to be a public hearing. I would think the ranking minority member ought to have a chance to go before the committee and talk about that money, whether it is needed, what it ought to be used for.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I would say to my friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts, if anybody in this House thinks that any serious investigation of the White House or this administration can begin on a partisan basis, as this is appearing to be, I think they are dooming it to a total failure. The notion that anything remotely resembling impeachment activity be sent to any committee other than the Committee on the Judiciary is a clear signal that something is wrong.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I would ask the ranking minority member, has there been any conversation on the part of any member of the majority, from the Committee on the Judiciary or elsewhere, with the gentleman dealing with how we might respond to Independent Counsel Starr?

Mr. CONYERS. No. Not only has that not happened, but I have been assured repeatedly, and I am sorry to have to put this into the RECORD now, that I would be kept abreast of all developments connected with this, because I have repeatedly been hearing in the media what they were trying to do. As a matter of fact, a January letter requesting this money was brought to me by a member of the press when I told them I had never seen it before. This document I did not see until after the hearing of the full Committee on the Judiciary late this afternoon.

So it is with some sadness that I make public that the agreement that I thought that I was entering into has been shattered. Perhaps it can be replaced. But I want the entire Congress to know that these unilateral Republican shenanigans, whether they come from the Speaker or from the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, work an extreme disservice on the processes that are within the jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary in the House.

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

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

THE TAXPAYER BILL OF RIGHTS III

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

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues the importance now of the passing of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights III. We know that it was not that long ago the Senate Finance Committee had hearings wherein IRS agents, presently working for the agency, as well as taxpayers, came forward to talk about the problems of abuse, the problems of mom and pop stores being levied with fines and with penalties for violations that had not occurred, but they had paid them, nonetheless, out of fear of the agency going after them, and yet these people do not have attorneys or CPAs to help them.

My Taxpayer Bill of Rights legislation, which has enjoyed bipartisan support, is, frankly, a bill that is going to move forward in this respect to change the burden of proof to make sure that taxpayers will now be presumed innocent, and the Commissioner of the IRS will have the burden of proving otherwise, instead of the reverse, the way it is now.

It also will say, no more quotas for IRS investigations, no more quotas for IRS audits, no more fishing expeditions where taxpayers live in fear of the IRS, no more random audits, and, more importantly than the ones I have already mentioned, the fifth provision of the bill says that, in fact, if the IRS is overreaching or causes a legal business or individual loss in an unfair way to any constituent, then they would be responsible for reimbursing that taxpayer.

Moreover, there would be whistleblower protection. If in fact an individual comes forward to talk about an IRS violation by an agency employee or the agency itself, then they will not be audited just out of retribution. Moreover, the bill calls for mediators to be provided in case someone wants to settle a claim.

These are all commonsense provisions to make the IRS more taxpayer-