

down, he will jump off the Capitol dome. And they will jump if it doesn't.

"They claim we are paying down the debt, but that's terribly misleading," Hollings complains. "We are not really paying down the debt, we're shifting it from one account to another. Actually, we're looting the trust funds so we can say the government's got a big surplus. It's just not true."

Hollings' argument takes us still deeper into the mysteries of federal accounting, but he has uncovered an important and widely believed myth about the new surpluses. His essential point is confirmed in the president's own midyear budget review. Its ten-year projections show the federal government steadily reducing its publicly held debts: the Treasury bonds, notes and bills used to borrow money in financial markets. Yet meanwhile, the federal government's total debt obligations will continue to escalate over the decade—an \$485 billion increase by 2009.

So what happened to the \$3 trillion surplus? It is something of an accounting mirage—like borrowing from the rent money to pay off your credit cards. Sooner or later, you still have to come up with the rent.

In fact, aside from Social Security, the government's vast borrowing from its other trust accounts—highways, military and civil-service retirement, Medicare—provides the underpinning for the supposed \$1 trillion surplus in its regular operating budget. Without those trust-fund loans, CBO acknowledges, its forecast of a ten-year surplus of \$996 billion shrinks to only \$250 billion. Someday someone has to come up with that money too—or else stiff those lenders.

Social Security surpluses are not new at all: They have been piling up since 1983, when the payroll tax was substantially increased to prevent insolvency. This money belongs to future retirees, not Congress or the White House, but it was not locked away for them. Instead, it was spent every year to cover the swollen deficits generated by the rest of the government—and IOUs were given to the trust fund. The government still owes all that money to the Social Security trust fund, and it intends to borrow lots more.

All that is really new is the promise, now that budget deficits are vanishing, that the government will stop using Social Security money to pay its yearly operating costs and instead use it only to pay back the public borrowings in financial markets. That's admirable, but it doesn't pay off the actual debt obligations of the government to Social Security retirees. The Treasury is still giving more IOUs to the trust fund—money it will have to pay back one day hence.

Some will insist that because the government is essentially borrowing from itself, none of this matters. But it does. The suggestion that any of Social Security's long-term financial problems are somehow being remedied by these transactions is utter fiction. A nasty day of reckoning remains ahead for American taxpayers—when Social Security recipients expect to get their money back and someone gets stuck with the burden.

The choices for a future president and Congress will be stark: They can go back to the financial markets and borrow trillions again. They can raise income taxes. Or they can cut Social Security benefits and screw the retirees.

Such duplicitous evasions have prompted an angry Hollings to denounce his colleagues. "This a shameful sideshow out here," he thundered in debate. "There is no dignity left in the Senate. No responsibility."

Indeed, none of his colleagues has taken up Hollings' proffered bet, though doubtless some of them would love to see him jump off the Capitol dome.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, September 9, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,654,163,509,903.96 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-four billion, one hundred sixty-three million, five hundred and nine thousand, nine hundred and three dollars and ninety-six cents).

One year ago, September 9, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,548,477,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred forty-eight billion, four hundred seventy-seven million).

Five years ago, September 9, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,679,665,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred seventy-nine billion, six hundred sixty-five million).

Twenty-five years ago, September 9, 1974, the Federal debt stood at \$479,367,000,000 (Four hundred seventy-nine billion, three hundred sixty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,174,796,509,938 (Five trillion, one hundred seventy-four billion, seven hundred ninety-six million, five hundred and nine thousand, nine hundred thirty-eight dollars) during the past 25 years.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-5083. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Community Services Block Grant Statistical Report" for fiscal year 1996; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5084. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Adjuvants, Production Aids, and Sanitizers" (Docket No. 99F-0994), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5085. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Polymers" (Docket No. 89F-0338), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5086. A communication from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Indirect Food Additives: Adjuvants, Production Aids, Sanitizers" (Docket No. 99F-0459), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5087. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Standards, Regulations and Variances, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Health Standards for Occupational

Noise Exposure" (RIN1219-AA53), received September 8, 1999; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5088. A communication from the Deputy Executive Secretary, Center for Health Plans and Providers, Health Care Financing Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Medicare Program; Graduate Medical Education (GME): Incentive Payments Under Plans for Voluntary Reduction in the Number of Residents" (RIN0938-AI27), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5089. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Section 7702 Closing Agreements" (Notice 99-47), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5090. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "July-September 1999 Bond Factor Amounts" (Revenue Ruling 99-38), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5091. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Hospital Corporation of America and Subsidiaries v. Commissioner" (109 T.C. 21 (1997)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5092. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Boyd Gaming Corporation v. Commissioner" (F3d__ (9th Cir. 1999), rev'g T.C. Memo 1997-445), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5093. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of the Tax Refund Offset Program" (RIN1545-AV50) (TD 8837), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5094. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Estate of Mellinger v. Commissioner" (112 T.C. 4 (1999)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5095. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Inflation-Indexed Debt Instruments" (RIN1545-AU45) (TD8838), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5096. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Vulcan Materials Company and Subsidiaries v. Commissioner" (96 T.C. 410 (1991), aff'd per curiam 959 F.2d 973 (11th Cir. 1992)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5097. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "St. Jude Medical, Inc. v. Commissioner" (33 F. 3d 1394 (8th Cir. 1994) rev'g in part 97 T.C. 457 (1991)), received September 7, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5098. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled