



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 106th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 145

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1999

No. 18

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 2, 1999.

I hereby designate the Honorable BILL BARRETT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. VISCLOSKY) for 5 minutes.

ILLEGAL DUMPING OF STEEL, A CRISIS IN AMERICA

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of legislation along with the gentleman from New York (Mr. QUINN), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY) and 96 other of my colleagues.

The 100 of us join together today to try to provide a solution to the crisis we face in the United States of America today involving the domestic steel industry. We want to help those Ameri-

cans who want to work in a steel mill in the United States of America, and I say want to because using the administration's figures it is clear that over the last 12 months, 8,775 steel workers have already lost their job because of this crisis. That translates into 24 steel workers, 24 American families today will lose a breadwinner in everything that connotes.

What is the cause of this crisis? Illegal dumping. Countries selling steel in the United States, or I should almost suggest giving it away in the United States of America, at below their costs of production, at below what they sell it in their home market.

This crisis began after July of 1997, and it is of astronomical proportions. Using trade figures from November of this past year, imports have increased over that approximately 18-month period of time by 48 percent. Imports in November of 1998, compared to pre-crisis level in July 1997, from Japan, increased by 303 percent; 303 percent as shown on the first chart.

Steel exports from Russia increased from July 1997 to November 1998 by 151 percent, 151 percent. Steel exports to the United States increased from Korea from July 1997 to November 1998 by 111 percent. Exports of steel to the United States from the Ukraine increased from July 1997 to November 1998 by 196 percent.

The result at Timken Company is that 160 workers were laid off in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Forty-seven workers were laid off at three Ohio steel manufacturing facilities. Forty union workers were laid off at Timken Latrobe Steel in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Four hundred people were released from the former Inland Steel Company in Indiana. At Geneva Steel Company in Vineyard, Utah, there is an 18 percent cutback. USX laid off 200 workers in Fairfield, Alabama, and 100 workers at the Mon Valley Works near Pittsburgh. Slater Steel Corporation

has slashed 51 positions. It has altogether reduced the salaried workforce by 22½ percent. Acme Metals in Riverdale, Illinois, has filed for Chapter XI bankruptcy.

There is Gulf States Steel Corporation in Gadsden, Alabama, where 100 steel workers have been laid off. Northwestern Steel and Wire Corporation in Sterling Falls, Illinois, 300 of 400 workers are out of work today. Weirton Steel Corporation, Weirton, West Virginia, more than 900 steel workers have lost their job.

No action was taken by last fall, and the Congressional Steel Caucus introduced a resolution. Language ultimately was sent to the administration begging, imploring and demanding that the President of the United States act. The President reported back to Congress with his action plan in January of this past year, and among other things the President indicated that the Japanese government has indicated, the President's word to us, that Japanese steel imports would return close to 1997 levels, close to 1997 levels, in 1999. A representative of the Japanese government later indicated that that potentially was not true.

The administration will come before us today and indicate that the Japanese have begun to correct their problem with the United States, and my colleagues can see by the second chart that, yes, indeed, exports from Japan have declined. Today they are 94 percent higher than they were at pre crisis levels, and I will bet steel workers in Japan have not lost their job.

But that contrasts to the USS/Fairless Works where Mike Dobrowolsky and Kenneth Houser were laid off the day before Thanksgiving. They are both in their mid forties, they are married, they each have two children. Both have worked for more than 20 years at Fairless; they are not working today. At Geneva Steel Corporation in Utah, Eric Shepherd is married with

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H275

three children and was among those laid off in September.

We need to act.

SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing a very diverse district in Illinois. I represent the south side of Chicago, the south suburbs in Cook and Will Counties, a lot of bedroom communities like the town of Morris where I live, towns like Peru, and a lot of farm towns. When representing a diverse district, of course one wants to listen and find out what is a common message, and I find, as I listen and learn, the concerns of the people of this very diverse district. They tell me one very clear message, and that is the people of our part of Illinois want solutions, solutions to the challenges that we face.

In fact, in 1994 when we were elected they sent us here with a very clear message that was part of that effort to find solutions, and that is we want to change how Washington works and make Washington responsive to the folks back home. When we were elected in 1994, we wanted to bring solutions to balance the budget, to cut taxes, to reform welfare, to tame the IRS. There were an awful lot of folks in Washington who said we could not do any of those things because they had always failed in the past. But I am proud to say that we did. I am pretty proud of our accomplishments: balancing the budget for the first time in 28 years, cutting taxes for the first time in 16 years, reforming welfare for the first time in a generation, taming the IRS for the first time ever. We produced a balanced budget that is now projecting a \$2.3 trillion; that is "T" as in Tom trillion dollars surplus of extra tax revenue. We produced a \$500 per child tax credit that will now benefit three million Illinois children. We produced welfare reform that has now lowered rolls in Illinois by 25 percent, and taxpayers now enjoy the same rights with the IRS that they do in the courtroom, and that is a taxpayer is innocent until proven guilty.

Mr. Speaker, those are real accomplishments, but we continue to face challenges in this Congress, and because this Congress held the President's feet to the fire, we balanced the budget, and now we are collecting more in taxes than we are spending. And the question is today: What do we do with that extra tax money? What do we do with that \$2.3 trillion surplus of extra tax revenue?

I believe it's pretty clear what the first priority is, and I think we all agree. We want to save Social Security. We want to save Social Security first, and I want to point out that last fall

this House of Representatives passed the 90-10 plan which would have set aside 90 percent of the budget surplus, the extra tax revenue to save Social Security. Two weeks ago in this very room the President said we now only need 62 percent. Well, we agree. We want to make the first priority, and we certainly agree that at least 62 percent of the surplus tax revenue should be reserved for saving Social Security. The question is: What do we do with the rest?

Some say, particularly Bill Clinton, we should save Social Security and spend the rest on new big government programs. Now I disagree. I believe we should save Social Security and give the rest back in tax relief. The question is, it is simple: Whose money is it in the first place?

If my colleagues go to a restaurant and they pay too much, they overpay their bill, the restaurant refunds their money. They do not keep it and spend it on something else. Well, clearly in this case the government is collecting too much. Well, let us give it back.

The question is: Do we want to save Social Security and create new government programs and spend the rest of the surplus, or do we want to give it back by saving Social Security and eliminating the marriage tax penalty and rewarding retirement savings? Tax Foundation says today that the tax burden is pretty high. In fact, for the average family in Illinois, 40 percent of the average family's income in Illinois now goes to Washington and Springfield and local taxing bodies at every level. In fact, since Bill Clinton was elected in 1992, the total amount of tax revenue collected has gone up 63 percent since 1992.

Clearly taxes are too high.

We can help working taxpayers we can help working taxpayers, we can help working families. Let us save Social Security and cut taxes. Let us save Social Security and eliminate the marriage tax penalty. Let us save Social Security and reward savings for retirement. Some say we cannot, but I believe we can. Just as we balanced the budget for the first time in 28 years, it is because we also cut taxes for the first time in 16 years, reformed welfare for the first time in a generation and tamed the IRS for the first time ever. We can also save Social Security, and lower taxes for working families and bring that tax burden down for the first time in a long time.

Mr. Speaker, let us save Social Security, let us cut taxes, let us eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

STAND UP FOR STEEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago the Ohio Valley made itself

heard here in the Nation's Capital. Thousands of steel workers and their families woke before dawn on a cold damp January day. They came from Weirton, they came from Wheeling, from all across the tri-state area. They jammed into dozens of buses for a 6 hour ride to Washington. When they got here, they rallied long and hard on the steps of this Capitol. Then they marched down Pennsylvania Avenue and rallied long and hard at the White House. Then they jammed back into their buses to get home before morning came again, and many of them lost a day's pay in the process.

So why did they do it?

They did it, Mr. Speaker, because our steel communities are in a state of pure crisis. We have been overtaken by illegal imports, and we cannot take it any more.

Every hour another American steel worker loses his or her job. Every hour another American family wonders when and if they will ever see another paycheck. And what is worst of all is that they have not done a single thing wrong. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they have done everything right.

For years the American steel workers have sacrificed, our American steel companies have made huge investments. They did it all in the name of efficiency, to achieve productivity standards unheard of, and now they are the world's best producers.

But that means nothing if our so-called partners do not play by the same rules. It means nothing if Japan and Russia and Korea can dump steel in our markets whenever they want.

That is not fair trade, Mr. Speaker. That is not even free trade. It's foolish trade, and it is, in fact, absolute folly for this Congress and this administration to sit and watch as the American steel industry is destroyed by unfair foreign imports.

Our steel industry is at the breaking point, Mr. Speaker. There's no time left for tough talk; there is only time for tough action.

Today the Steel Caucus is introducing tough legislation. I commend my good friends: the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. VISCLOSKEY) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) for their leadership on this issue. I am proud to cosponsor the bills that are being brought before the Congress. I urge my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to make this legislation the very first priority in the 106th Congress. I urge them to stand up for steel.

□ 1245

THE STEEL IMPORT CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. REGULA) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.