of Members do not like the fact that this is being offered. But I am offering it because I basically believe this bill is flawed.

First of all, I think it is based on the assumption that the Congress spends more than the President, and in fact history will show that in this last decade we have spent considerably less than the President has asked for. When you take a look at specific Presidential requests for rescissions, since 1974, Mr. Chairman, Presidents have asked this Congress to rescind $73 billion in appropriations. This Congress has actually rescinded $93 billion in appropriations, 27 percent more than the President asked us to cut. Those are not my numbers. Those are the General Accounting Office's numbers.

We rescinded double the amount of spending that President Bush wanted us to rescind, and to date we have rescinded 33 percent more in spending than President Clinton has asked us to.

So, I think that record should be cleared up, and, as the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Appropriations, I feel an obligation to do so.

I say to my colleagues, I think, if you really want to get at spending, for instance, you will consider the Orton amendment, which comes next, which if it is not adopted will leave a huge loophole in the item veto process because it will apply only to appropriations and not contract authority, something which I think would be a national joke.

But I am also offering this for a second reason, because I simply believe it is fundamentally wrong for us to be making decisions based upon what one-third plus one in this place thinks ought to be public policy. I believe that this vehicle, as it stands now, is a disgraceful and gutless granting of gigantic Executive power by this institution, and I am ashamed, I am ashamed to see that kind of willing power transfer. Because I think this institution's primary responsibility under the Constitution is to protect the American people from the excessive abuse of Executive power. And in my view, as it stands now, this proposal invites the President to use his powers that are being granted under this proposal to greatly expand his ability to leverage additional spending into each and every bill that goes through this place.

Mr. Chairman, I will explain more when we debate the amendment to be offered by Mr. STENHOLM on Monday what I mean by that.

But if, nonetheless, this institution is hell bent on that kind of a reckless transfer of power, then I think we ought to make it apply to every single project which right now Members of this body and Members of the other body think are safely beyond the reach of Presidential veto, and that is why I am offering this, so that the President will have a 10-day window after the passage of this misguided proposal during which he can examine each and every tidbit in every appropriation bill last year.

□ 1440

Now, I think we did a good job on the Committee on Appropriations last year. We eliminated some 40 programs. We cut 408 programs below the previous year's spending level. And the earmarks that were provided were substantially reduced below the level of the previous year.

The CHAIRMAN. The time of the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY] has expired.

(By unanimous consent, Mr. OBEY was allowed to proceed for 1 additional minute.)

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, it seems to me nonetheless that the record obviously is not perfect. We had to accept many ''suggestions'' from the other body, for instance. So I think if this is going to go into effect, Members ought not to be allowed to assume that their own specific projects are beyond presidential reach. We ought to know in concrete terms just what is at risk.

So I offer this amendment in that spirit and would hope that it would be accepted and adopted by this House.

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support to the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, as I indicated before the gentleman offered his amendment, we have examined the amendment and want to commend the gentleman, frankly, on his willingness to open up his own appropriations bills for this line-item veto, appropriations bills which were dealt with last year.

I think when the former chairman of the committee recognizes the need of a line-item veto and admits the benefits it provides in eliminating unnecessary spending, we should take note and thank him for his very good work in this regard.

I think I would ask the gentleman, if he has indicated he knows where the bodies are buried and where the skeletons are, that we would have that list as promptly as possible and perhaps we could rescind or eliminate that spending and save the President the need to exercise the line-item veto.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. CLINGER. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. I think all you have to do is take a look at every appropriations report, because they are fairly well spelled out. I am not suggesting that most of them are bad items. I think the vast majority of them are infinitely defensible and, in fact, in the national interest. But I just want Members to have very specific and concrete understandings beforehand of the kind of power the President is going to have.

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time.

As I say, Mr. Chairman, we are pleased to accept the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Chairman, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Chairman, is it the Chair's understanding that a ruling was arrived at or an understanding was arrived at with respect to the votes on Monday and the 2 o'clock versus 5 o'clock time? Because that is not clear to me.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole is not in a position to rule on that question.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Chairman, a further parliamentary inquiry. How might I go about making that inquiry? My understanding is that issue was not settled.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman should inquire of the leadership who makes those decisions.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. OBEY].

The amendment was agreed to.

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker having assumed the chair, Mr. BOEHNER, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2) to give the President item veto authority over appropriation acts and targeted tax benefits in revenue acts, had come to no resolution thereon.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE PRIVILEGED RESOLUTION ON MONDAY NEXT

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule IX, I hereby give notice of my intention to offer a resolution that raises a question of privilege of the House. The form of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES.—

Whereas rule IX of the Rules of the House of Representatives provides that questions of privilege shall arise whenever the rights of the House collectively are affected;

Whereas, under the precedents, customs, and traditions of the House pursuant to rule IX, a question of privilege has arisen in cases involving the constitutional prerogatives of the House;

Whereas section 8 of Article I of the Constitution vests in Congress the power to ''coin money, regulate the value thereof, and of foreign coins'';

Whereas section 9 of Article I of the Constitution provides that ''no money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law'';

Whereas the President has recently sought the enactment of legislation to authorize the President to undertake efforts to support economic stability in Mexico and strengthen the Mexican peso;

Whereas the President announced on January 31, 1995, that actions are being taken to achieve the same result without the enactment of legislation by the Congress;

Whereas the obligation or expenditure of funds by the President without consideration

by the House of Representatives of legislation to make appropriated funds available for obligation or expenditure in the manner proposed by the President raises grave questions concerning the prerogatives of the House and the integrity of the proceedings of the House;

Whereas the exchange stabilization fund was created by statute to stabilize the exchange value of the dollar and is also required by statute to be used in accordance with the obligations of the United States under the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund; and

Whereas the commitment of $20,000,000,000 of the resources of the exchange stabilization fund to Mexico by the President without congressional approval may jeopardize the ability of the fund to fulfill its statutory purposes: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and transmit, within 7 days after the adoption of this resolution, a report to the House of Representatives containing the following:

(1) The opinion of the Comptroller General on whether any of the proposed actions of the President, as announced on January 31, 1995, to strengthen the Mexican peso and support economic stability in Mexico requires congressional authorization or appropriation.

(2) A detailed evaluation of the terms and conditions of the commitments and agreements entered into by the President, or any officer or employee of the United States acting on behalf of the President, in connection with providing such support, including the terms which provide for collateral or other methods of assuring repayment of any outlays by the United States.

(3) An analysis of the resources which the International Monetary Fund has agreed to make available to strengthen the Mexican peso and support economic stability in Mexico, including—

(A) an identification of the percentage of such resources which are attributable to capital contributions by the United States to such Fund; and

(B) an analysis of the extent to which the Fund's participation in such efforts will likely require additional contributions by member states, including the United States, to the Fund in the future.

(4) An evaluation of the role played by the Bank for International Settlements in international efforts to strengthen the Mexican peso and support economic stability in Mexico and the extent of the financial exposure of the United States, including the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, with respect to the Bank's activities.

(5) A detailed analysis of the relationships between the Bank for International Settlements and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and between the Bank and the Secretary of the Treasury, and the extent to which such relationships involve a financial commitment to the Bank or other members of the Bank, on the part of the United States, of public money or any other financial resources under the control of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

(6) An accounting of fund flows, during the 24 months preceding the date of the adoption of this resolution, through the exchange stabilization fund established under section 5302 of title 31, United States Code, the manner in which amounts in the fund have been used domestically and internationally, and the extent to which the use of such amounts to strengthen the Mexican peso and support economic stability in Mexico represents a departure from the manner in which amounts in the fund have previously been used, including conventional uses such as short-term currency swaps to defend the dollar as compared to intermediate- and long-term loans and loan guarantees to foreign countries.

□ 1450

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time or place designated by the Speaker in the legislative schedule within two legislative days of its being properly noticed. The Chair will announce the Speaker's designation at a later time. In the meantime, the form of the resolution proffered by the gentleman from Mississippi will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair is not at this point making a determination as to whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will made at the time designated by the Speaker for consideration of the resolution.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRES

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will state it.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as an original cosponsor of this privileged resolution, I would like to inquire of the Chair at what point we might have that Speaker's ruling? At what point might this matter be scheduled for debate for the RECORD, please?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That will be determined by the Speaker.

Ms. KAPTUR. What would be the maximum amount of time that the Speaker might allow before making that ruling?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, that is 2 legislative days.

Ms. KAPTUR. Two legislative days. So that would mean that we would have some opinion from the Speaker by late on Tuesday at the very latest?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That would appear to be correct.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, a further parliamentary inquiry: In what form will the Speaker so inform the Members?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker will consult with the Members as to when he makes his ruling.

Ms. KAPTUR. Consult with the cosponsors, the original cosponsors of the resolution?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker will make sure that he gets the word to the gentleman from Mississippi.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I have researched this and feel very strongly that it indeed involves the privileges of the House, since this is a matter constitutional in nature that is mandatory for this body to fulfill.

It is my intention, should there be a ruling of the Chair that this is not a privileged resolution, to question the ruling of the Chair. Therefore, the timing of that ruling is of importance so that I can have the maximum number of Members who feel strongly about this issue on the floor.

Would it be possible for me to be notified in writing 24 hours in advance, giving me the time that I should expect such ruling?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker will comply with rule IX.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. At what point during the legislative business on that second day will this be brought to a vote?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The matter will be determined by the Speaker.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Is the Speaker's intention to in any way inform the Members so as to give them advanced warning of this ruling?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The current occupant of the chair cannot prejudge what the Speaker will do.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I have a further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman will state it.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, in past such rulings, how has the Speaker notified the Members?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker would notify the Members through the Parliamentarian or through the staff of the Speaker's office.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chair.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. WISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I want to rise today to state my support of the President's proposal to raise the minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 in 45 cent increments.

Today in West Virginia a family of three making the minimum wage is below the poverty line, making $8,800 a year.

In the 1960's and 1970's, a family of three making the minimum wage was above the poverty line, but today they would be $3,500 below the official poverty line.

The minimum wage today is, in real dollars, $2.25 below the real value of the minimum wage in 1968. The income gap is only widening for West Virginia families. In fact, 17 percent of our families in West Virginia earn less than $5 per hour.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking, and rightly so, people to leave welfare. We are trying to create jobs. We are telling people the most important thing is to work.

There must be a reward to work. One of the rewards is making sure that the