

DON'T LET TAXPAYERS GET
"RAILROADED"

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

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this week the House of Representatives is expected to be voting on a bill, H.R. 4844, the Railroad Retirement and Survivors Improvement Act of 2000. This legislation has been advertised as a historic agreement that is overwhelmingly supported by both rail management and labor.

Why have they agreed so easily? The answer is because American taxpayers rather than the private railroad companies are going to be footing the bill for their private pension fund.

Let me talk about the facts of this railroad retirement bill. The railroad retirement system already has an unfunded liability of \$39.7 billion, according to our Committee on the Budget staff. The industry would need to increase contributions from 21 percent of wages to 31 percent of wages for the next 30 years to cover this shortfall.

Accurate accounting shows that the industry has received at least \$85 billion more in benefits than it has paid in contributions.

The rail industry has for many years received special government subsidies that are available to no other industry. Under current law, income taxes paid by rail retirees do not go to U.S. Treasury. They are instead transferred to the Railroad Retirement System, costing taxpayers over \$5 billion.

The government also currently pays the cost of Amtrak's social security contributions, costing taxpayers another \$150 million a year.

Now this plan, H.R. 4844, would reduce both employer and employee contributions to the retirement fund. Let me say that again. They are going to reduce both employee and employer contributions to the retirement fund while providing substantial increases in benefits, so they reduce the contribution, they increase benefits, and they charge the American taxpayers for these private business pension plans.

Specifically, the bill will, number one, repeal a 26.5 cent per hour employer contribution for supplemental annuities; two, it will reduce employer contributions from the current 16.1 percent to 14.2 percent in the year 2002; three, it will expand benefits for widows; four, it will reduce the vesting requirement from 10 to 5 years; five, it will repeal the current cap on payments of earned benefits; six, it is going to reduce the minimum retirement age to 60.

This legislation fails to move to a privatized retirement system. It reduces contributions of the employee and employer and while substantially increasing benefits. It is going to cost the taxpayers of the country huge

amounts to subsidize these kinds of pension plans for private sector business. The bill as written should not be passed.

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM RUSSELL
MOTE

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, a friend of mine died this past week. His name was William Russell Mote. He was not only my friend, he was the Members', too, and a friend of all Americans, as well. As a matter of fact, he was a friend to people all over the world.

I would like to tell the Members why. Bill Mote was born in my State of Florida in the city of Tampa at the turn of the century. The world was a far different place for Bill Mote back in the early part of the last century. Teddy Roosevelt was President. There was a world without jet planes, without television. No man had flown in space. It was a world that encouraged a young boy to go fishing in the beautiful waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

It was also a time that encouraged entrepreneurs, and Bill Mote took full advantage. He could not wait to venture out into the world and start his own business. While he never earned a college degree, Bill Mote was a well-educated individual whose charisma and charm paved him a very successful path in the business world.

Mr. Mote's love for the world extended far beyond the realm of his exciting business ventures. He loved the adventure of travel and the excitement of the sea. He visited many places after he sold his company, and concentrated on trips that would enable him to be with marine scientists, oceanographers, and biologists.

Bill recognized very early on that irresponsible global habits were endangering his beloved sea. What a shame it would be that we would be destroying one of our two unexplored frontiers; a vast one at that, covering three-fourths of the world. To Bill Mote, that was just as exciting as man landing on the moon. Discovering and protecting our oceans became his passion.

It is not surprising to people who knew Bill to understand how his passion was superseded only by his generosity in his goal. He definitely put his money where his heart was. He met Eugenie Clark. Some may know her as the famous "shark lady" on PBS nature shows.

Bill and Dr. Clark started a partnership that would last over 35 years, and would be the root of Mr. Mote's philanthropic mission to save our oceans. Always drawn to the water, he settled on the West Coast of Florida, in Sarasota, with the intent to build a marine laboratory. He used what he learned from his travels and joined Dr. Clark in es-

tablishing one of the finest marine laboratories in the world.

When Mr. Mote discovered Cape Haze Laboratory in 1965, he immediately set his mind into catapulting the small marine research facility into a world-renowned program. Henceforth, the Mote Marine Laboratory, named after its principal benefactor, has been the catalyst for breeding and mammal programs which benefit sea life all over the world.

The lab first became known internationally for shark research, and in 1991, Congress designated Mote Marine Laboratory as the National Center for Shark Research. Bill Mote, who himself never had the opportunity of higher education, initiated a Scholar Chair in Fisheries Ecology and Enhancement at Florida State University.

He also encouraged younger people to become interested in marine life. Schoolchildren were exposed to the smallest creatures as well as the magnificent sharks and dolphins at Mote Marine Laboratories Aquarium. A new state of the art Marine Mammal Rescue Center gives all visitors a firsthand look at the expert veterinary care that Mote's Marine biologists provide.

Bill will always be remembered as a promoter of education, as well as an excellent educator himself. He was at the helm when the Jason Project began at Mote Marine. That was developed as an educational venture between Dr. Ballard and Mote Marine. Dr. Ballard is using Jason and Jason II remote submersibles, credited with the discoveries of the Titanic, the Bismarck, and other landmark discoveries beneath the depths of our oceans. Mr. Mote was constantly expanding the depths of our understanding, even to the bottom of the sea.

Even larger than his love of the oceans was his love for education. He gave not only to the studies of marine biology and oceanography, but also relentlessly promoted the fields to youth and professionals alike with his own special blend of enthusiasm. In 1968, Mr. Mote was awarded the Gold Medal of the International Oceanographic Foundation.

Many of us who knew Bill Mote have our own stories to tell. After meeting a person like Bill, his energetic and passionate love for the ocean was magnetic. His relentless drive passion and vigor was rivaled only by his charismatic personality.

Bill Mote was to all of us and will remain in our hearts a true example of what one person can do with a little determination.

I served on the board of Mote Marine before I came to Congress. I had the pleasure of knowing Bill Mote well. He was a devoted husband and brother. He was a counselor to marine biologists. He was a teacher to all ages of students. Most of all, he was a true conservationist, a self-educated man who saw a need in the world and went ahead to do something about it. He definitely graduated life with honors.