

ADMINISTRATION'S BALANCE-OF-PAYMENTS PROPOSALS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 1968

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, D.C.

The committee met at 10 a.m., pursuant to notice, in the committee room, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Al Ullman presiding.

Mr. ULLMAN. The committee will be in order.

I see we have in the hearing room our distinguished colleague, the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Pepper. We will be delighted to hear from you, Mr. Pepper.

STATEMENT OF HON. CLAUDE PEPPER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. PEPPER. Thank you.

Mr. ULLMAN. We welcome you before the committee. We always welcome your sage advice.

Mr. PEPPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman and members of this distinguished committee, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to express my views today on the proposed enactment of a series of measures designed to restrain American travel abroad in order to improve our balance-of-payments position.

At the outset, let me state that I am greatly disturbed by the tax proposals which you have before you for consideration, and that I do not favor their enactment at this time. I say this not because I do not share the administration's concern with the balance-of-payments dilemma in which the United States now finds itself. This is a situation which cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely.

But I do not think it is necessary to accept the negative and, I fear, defeatist approach. I do not think we should despair, before we have tried, of finding sound and constructive alternatives to the proposals.

I wish to stress particularly the alternative of doing more to bring foreign visitors to our country and of doing a better job of making them welcome so that they will serve on their return as an encouragement for their fellow countrymen to visit us.

The President's Industry-Government Special Task Force on Travel which I commend in the warmest way for the excellent recommendations which it has made, has recommended that we follow the positive course, and I interpolate from my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, to say that I believe that positive course is going to bring about effective results.