

Mr. President, I am going to vote against the adjournment motion until some resolution of this farm program is made, and the rice farmers of my State, who produce 40 percent of all of the rice in this Nation, have some certainty. The first thing you know—as my colleague said in the press conference this morning, Senator PRYOR—you keep messing around so they cannot plant their rice, and the next thing you will know we will lose all of our world markets for American rice. We have squandered \$1 to \$1.5 billion mickeying around one-upping each other.

In closing, Mr. President, let me repeat. The people of the country last year had a right to be angry. They were angry for all kinds of different reasons. I will not presume to know precisely why everybody voted the way they did. They were not voting for chaos. They were not voting to see how much havoc we could create and impose on innocent people. They wanted changes. They did not want to see the Government dismantled. They did not want to see the Government shut down and leave the country defenseless, almost anarchistic.

So tomorrow I hope will be an interesting and enlightening and sensible debate. I hope when we leave here tomorrow night, if and when we do, that we leave with a pretty good feeling that we finally have begun to recognize each other's feelings about this and have finally begun to get our act together and reassure the people of the country that we are not really just a bunch of bickering children up here.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NEW WORLD MINE

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, as everyone in this body knows I have been a vocal proponent of reforming the 1872 mining law. This 124-year-old anachronism continues to permit the extraction of billions of dollars' worth of hardrock minerals from public land without compensating the taxpayers and in a manner that causes significant environmental degradation. Unfortunately, the new majority in Congress has little or no interest in meaningful reform of the mining law.

During the congressional recess an article appeared in the New York Times discussing the proposed New World gold mine which would be located within 2.5 miles of Yellowstone National Park. It is painfully obvious that unless action is taken soon, Yellowstone will be gravely imperiled. In fact, the World Heritage Commission

recently designated Yellowstone National Park a world heritage site in danger primarily due to the proposed mine.

Mr. President, some of my colleagues from the West argue that mining is a primary way of life in their States and any changes in the mining law that made it more difficult to pollute the land or provided for the payment of meaningful royalties would have a negative impact on their States. However, as the New York Times article points out, their constituents do not necessarily agree. In fact, much of the western economy depends on pristine land, air, and water. Certain mining operations are not synonymous with such conditions, especially in the absence of more stringent environmental restrictions.

The scars of previous mining operations are littered throughout the country. In fact, 59 sites on the Superfund national priority list are directly related to mining. According to the Bureau of Mines, there are 180,000 acres of land and 12,000 miles of rivers that have been polluted by waste from abandoned mines. The cost to taxpayers to clean up this mess will be astronomical. Yet no one seems willing to do anything to prevent future disasters, such as the New World mine. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to carefully consider what we may be doing to our national treasures, such as Yellowstone Park, if we do not act.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a report that appeared in the January 7 issue of the New York Times regarding the "Montana Mining Town Fights Gold-Rush Plan" dealing with the gold mine that is about to be built just outside the gates of Yellowstone, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Jan. 7, 1996]
MONTANA MINING TOWN FIGHTS GOLD-RUSH
PLAN

(By James Brooke)

COOKE CITY, MT.—From Canadian mining barons to President Clinton to American environmentalists, the bitterest mining controversy of recent months has swirled like an alpine blizzard around this tiny mountain village of 80 people.

On one side, Canada's largest natural resources conglomerate is determined to dig \$750 million of gold and silver out of a nearby 8,900-foot peak. On the other, environmentalists assert that the mine would inevitably leak acid into Yellowstone National Park, three miles to the west.

Often overlooked in the international clash of press releases and lawsuits are the residents here who would be affected. In a town founded by gold miners, one might expect to find people enthusiastic about a plan to open the state's largest gold mine on Henderson Mountain, a peak named after a gold panner. But skepticism about the proposal is surprisingly plentiful here, reflecting a growing hostility to mining in Montana, a state that is shifting its economic base from mining to tourism.

Even at the Miner's Saloon, amid mining decor of picks and shovels, criticism is rife. "I'm vehemently against it," said Chris War-

ren, a 24-year-old resident, who was echoed by the bartender and four men nursing drinks at the bar.

In dissent, the saloon keeper, Larry Wick-er, said he appreciated the younger generation's patronage, but not their views on mining. "If it weren't for the miners, Cooke City would be part of little Russia," he said, referring to this sliver of private land surrounded by Government land, including Yellowstone and two national forests.

In a tribute to Montana's 19th century mining origins, the state seal bears the motto, "oro y plata," gold and silver. But Montana's combined income from mining and logging was surpassed in the early 1990's by recreational tourism—fly fishing, elk hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, camping and river rafting. Anglers alone spend \$410 million a year in this state.

The shifting political winds from this economic transformation are buffeting the Henderson Mountain mine project, which cannot proceed until it wins environmental clearances from various state and Federal authorities. The process could easily take two years or more.

On the far side of a mountain saddle here, the mining company, Crown Butte Mines Inc., would hollow out Henderson Mountain at the rate of 1,500 tons a day. Working at almost 9,000 feet, the miners would combat a forbidding climate that includes 23 frost-free days a year and about 40 feet of snowfall a year.

Crown Butte purchased the mining rights on the private land after deciding that technological advances and new discoveries would make mining profitable.

Environmentalists, pointing out Old Faithful geyser only 60 miles to the southwest, said the proposed mining site is in the nation's secondmost seismically active area after the San Andreas Fault. They contend that an earthquake would rupture a disposal site filled with potentially toxic waste from the operation.

But Crown Butte Mines maintains that it would build a dam strong enough to withstand any tremor of the magnitude registered in the last 150 years. While mining advocates often paint their environmental opponents as outsiders or newcomers, polls indicate that Montana voters are increasingly hostile to new mines and to economic growth, especially if it means new residents.

In a poll of 817 registered voters conducted in December for The Billings Gazette, 48 percent of the respondents said that economic benefits would not outweigh possible environmental damage from the project here, the New World Mine. Only 29 percent favored the mine.

Montana, with a population of 850,000, has only six people per square mile. But 31 percent of respondents called for no more population growth, and 45 percent agreed with the statement: "We're approaching our limits." The poll's margin of sampling error was plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The dispute over the mine may heat up soon when the United States Forest Service releases an environmental impact statement.

In the six months leading up to this report, world environmental attention focused on this remote mountain village. A city in name only, Cooke has a one-room school and a three-block-long Main Street that ends in a snowdrift half the year.

On Aug. 25, President Clinton thundered over Cooke City's proposed mine site in a military helicopter. Afterward, he ordered a two-year ban on mining in the 4,500 acres of National Forest land surrounding Henderson Mountain.

In September, the village visitors were members of the World Heritage Committee,

which monitors sites designated by international treaty as having "universal value to mankind." Citing the mine project, among other threats, the committee added Yellowstone to its list of "World Heritage in Danger."

To drum up support, Crown Butte hired as a consultant Birch Bayh, a former United States Senator with a record as an environmentalist. The largest investor in Crown Butte is Noranda Inc., Canada's largest natural resources company, which is controlled by the Toronto financiers Edward and Peter Brofman.

The debate here speaks of larger tensions between mining and recreation in the state. "Mining is an anachronism now—the town has become dependent on Yellowstone for its livelihood," said Jim Barrett, a local carpenter who is chairman of the Beartooth Alliance, a local environmental group that opposes the mine. "To plop this huge industrial complex into here would not only disrupt our lives, but would have serious environmental consequences."

Some people think the mine would mar tourism for a town that has four campgrounds, three hunting outfitters, three snowmobile rental companies and 15 hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts. But at Joan and Bill's Family Restaurant on Main Street, a patron, Lyle Hendricks, said the \$100 million mining investment would outweigh any harm to tourism. "People worry about the stress of losing a job when the mine plays out in 20 years," said Mr. Hendricks, a bearded man who builds steel Quonset huts here. "What about the stress of not having a job now?"

After Mr. Hendricks left, the waitress, Jennifer Mullee, 20, commented, "In 10 years, the mining company will be gone, and the land will be destroyed for our children."

Opinion surveys of Montana adults indicate that women oppose mining by far greater margins than men.

Mine supporters like the saloon keeper, Mr. Wicker, say other mines have proved safe. In Jardine, Mont., he said, an underground gold mine has burrowed to "within yards" of the Yellowstone Park with no ill result.

A fifth generation Montanan and a mining engineer by training, Mr. Wicker dismissed the mine's opponents as "flatlanders, people from Nebraska." "Everyone who gets here says, 'I'm the last person here, I've got my little piece of Montana,'" said Mr. Wicker, who plans to open a poker room and expand his saloon hours if the mine is approved.

Cooke City is a far cry from the 19th century gold rush days when 5,000 raucous miners packed the town.

For half the year, the only way to get to Cody, Wyo., the nearest large city, about 40 miles away, is to travel by snowmobile over Colter Pass. A year-round mining operation would keep the road to Cody plowed.

Mining officials promise to leave local creek water cleaner than when they found it. As a legacy of past mines, sections of local streams still run rust red from acid drainage.

"We can still use some of the money made from the mine to clean up the area, to backfill the old mine sites," Joseph J. Baylls, president of Crown Butte, said in a telephone interview from Toronto. "At the end of the day, it will be better than today."

But experience has left many Montanans skeptical of mining companies. "In 20 years, the town will boom and bust, just like Butte," said Matt Schneider, the Mining Saloon's 22-year-old antimining bartender.

Long fabled as "The Richest Hill on Earth," the gold and copper deposits of Butte, Mont., petered out in recent decades, leaving a legacy of pollution and unemployment. The Atlantic Richfield Company in-

herited much responsibility for the environmental mess in 1983 when it bought the principal Butte operator, the Anaconda Minerals Company.

In October, in a move that reflected Montana's tougher stand towards mining companies, the State Justice Department sent Arco a cleanup bill of \$713 million.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I wonder if the Senator from Kansas is prepared, or does she need a little additional time to get ready?

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I am ready to go and, rather than call for a quorum, will get started on some comments that I would like to make.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

The Chair informs the Senator that there are 4 minutes remaining under the control of the majority in morning business.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I would like to offer just a few observations on comments that were made by President Clinton in his State of the Union speech the other evening regarding health insurance reform. I was pleased that President Clinton mentioned it, because I think it is a subject of great importance to us.

As we debate the future of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, American families are growing increasingly anxious about the availability, portability, and cost of their own private health coverage.

While the comprehensive health reform debate ended well over a year ago, the American people continue to rank health reform as a priority and health care as a top concern. A poll conducted late last year by Princeton Survey Research Associates found that more Americans are concerned about their own health coverage than crime, high taxes, the "political system," and the economy. Both the Princeton poll and a Times Mirror poll also found that health care topped the list of issues Americans most want the Presidential candidates to address.

The health insurance problem is not merely one of perception. The number of uninsured and underinsured Americans continues to climb:

First, there are now over 40 million Americans without health insurance.

Second, over 1 million working Americans have lost health insurance in the last 2 years alone.

Third, and, over 80 million Americans have preexisting conditions that could make it difficult for them to maintain health coverage when they change jobs.

Mr. President, Congress has the opportunity this year to address middle-class Americans' concerns about the diminishing availability, portability, and affordability of health coverage in a bipartisan way.

A health insurance reform bill proposed by myself and Senator KENNEDY, S. 1028, passed the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee unani-

mously last August and now awaits action on the Senate Calendar. Similar measures are pending in the House of Representatives, including a companion bill introduced by Representative ROUKEMA of New Jersey.

Through sensible, market-based reforms, the Health Insurance Reform Act would:

First, limit the ability of insurers and employers to impose preexisting condition exclusions;

Second, prevent insurers from dropping coverage when an individual changes jobs or a family member becomes ill; and

Third, help small companies gain more purchasing clout in the market.

The General Accounting Office estimates that the Health Insurance Reform Act would help at least 25 million Americans each year, and the Congressional Budget Office predicts that it would do so without any cost to American taxpayers.

SUPPORT FOR THE HEALTH REFORM ACT

The Health Insurance Reform Act enjoys broad support. It passed the Labor and Human Resources by a 16 to 0 vote and has attracted 40 cosponsors—20 Republicans and 20 Democrats—from across the political spectrum. Moreover, it has been endorsed by a wide range of outside organizations, including the National Governors' Association, the National Association of State Insurance Commissioners, the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, Small Business United, the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the American Medical Association.

I believe the legislation has achieved broad consensus for two main reasons.

First, it is narrowly focused. It does not contain employer mandates, mandatory purchasing alliances, new taxes or new bureaucracies. It does not remake the private health care system in the image of the United States Post Office. Instead, the legislation focuses only on those areas where broad, bipartisan agreement existed during the health care debate in the 104th Congress and where State insurance reforms have demonstrated the ability to work.

Second, the legislation was crafted with significant input from consumers, insurers, businesses, hospitals, and doctors. It is carefully attuned to the rapidly changing private health care market. As the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other employers said in a recent letter, the Health Insurance Reform Act would:

* * * improve health coverage for tens of millions of American workers and their families * * * through carefully designed rules that are workable for employers who voluntarily sponsor health plans and for their employees.

RESPONSE TO CONCERNS

The Health Insurance Reform Act is not without some detractors. We have worked closely with the health insurance industry, and insurers generally support the bill. For example, Blue-Cross