□ 1209

So (two-thirds of those present having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, the pending business is the question of the Speaker's approval of the Journal of the last day's proceedings.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 459

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 459.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HEFLEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE GOVERNMENT'S APPETITE FOR LAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, I did a Special Order about a tax cut and how one can never satisfy government's appetite or demand for money. I said then that if we gave every department and agency double what they got the year before, they might be happy for a short time, but they would soon be back crying about a shortfall in funding. Everyone supports education, for example, and I certainly do.

□ 1215

But you almost never hear the fact that education spending has gone up at a rate many times the rate of inflation over the last several years.

But I want to expand today on something else that I mentioned in that special order of a few days ago, and that is government's appetite for land.

Just as you can never satisfy government's appetite for money, you can never satisfy government's desire for land. They always want more, and they have been getting it at what people should realize is an alarming rate.

Today, over 30 percent of the land in the United States is owned by the Federal Government. Another almost 20 percent is owned by State and local governments or quasi-governmental agencies.

So today you have about half the land in some type of public or governmental ownership.

The most alarming thing is the speed with which this government greed for land has grown over the past 30 years or 40 years.

Another alarming aspect of this trend is the growing number of restrictions that government at all levels is putting on the land that does remain in private hands.

A few years ago, the National Home Builders Association told me if there was strict enforcement of the wetlands rules and regulations, over 60 percent of the developable land would be off limits for homes.

Now some who already have nice homes might think this would be good, to stop most development. But you cannot stop it, because the population keeps growing, and people have to have someplace to live.

So what happens? When government keeps buying and restricting more and more land, it does two things: It drives up the costs and causes more and more people to be jammed closer and closer together.

First, it drives up land and building costs so that many young or lower income families are priced out of the housing market, especially for new homes.

Second, it forces developers to build on smaller and smaller postage-stamp-size lots or build townhouses or apartments.

Do you ever wonder why subdivisions built in the 1950s or 1960s often have big yards and now new subdivisions do not, or why new homes that should cost $50 a square foot now cost $100 a square foot or more? It is in large part because government keeps buying or restricting so much land.

This trend is causing more and more people to be jammed into smaller and smaller areas, increasing traffic, pollution, crime, and just an overall feeling of being overcrowded.

It is sometimes referred to as the urban sprawl, and environmental extremists are attacking it because they know it is unpopular, but they are the very people who have caused it.

Most of these environmental extremists come from very wealthy families, and they probably have nice homes already or even second homes in the country.

But it is not fair and it is not right, Mr. Speaker, for the people who already have what they want to demand policies that drive up the costs and put an important part of the American dream out of reach for millions of younger or lower income people.

Make no mistake about it, when government buys or restricts more and more land, it drives up the costs of the rest of the land. And this hurts poor and lower income and middle income people the most.

Even those forced to live in apartments are hurt, because apartment developers have to pass their exorbitant land and regulatory costs on to their tenants. When government takes land, they almost always take it from poor or lower income people or small farmers.

We have way too many industrial parks in this country today. States and local governments, which do almost nothing for older small businesses, will give almost anything to some big company to move from someplace else.

Is it right for governments to take property for very little paid to small farmers and then give it to big foreign or multinational companies or even to big companies to develop resort areas for the wealthy? I do not think so.

One of the most important things we need to do to insure future prosperity is to stop government at all levels from taking over more private property. Anyone who does not understand this should read a book called The Noblest Triumph, Property and Prosperity Through the Ages by Tom Bethell. The whole book is important, but a couple of brief excerpts: The Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Friedman has said, ''You cannot have a free society without private property? Recent immigrants have been delighted to find you can buy property in the United States without paying bribes.

The call for secure property rights in Third World countries today is not an attempt to help the rich. It is not the property of those who have access to Swiss bank accounts that needs to be protected. It is the small and insecure possessions of the poor.

This key point was well understood by Pope Leo XIII who wrote that the fundamental principle of socialism, which would make all possessions public property, is to be utterly rejected because it injures the very ones whom it seeks to help.''

Over the years, when government has taken private property, it has most often taken it from lower and middle income people and small farmers. Today, federal, state and local governments, and quasi-governmental agencies now own about half the land in this Nation. The most disturbing thing is the rapid rate at which this taking has increased in the last 40 years. Environmentalists who have supported most of this should realize that the