

The owner of the property or the occupant of the property, should be permitted to go with the appraiser when he makes his appraisal and nobody but an idiot, in my judgment, would oppose him, because he has to get as much information as he can to make a decent appraisal—I have always wanted the man along if he would go along. Inside his house, he must go along, because you are in his most private possession. But at the time the negotiations begin, this man should be offered the appraised value, but he should also be told specifically what is happening to his property in terms of grade changes, and a lot of other things that are involved in this. He should have access to the surveys not only in terms of the limits of the taking but in terms of all that goes on in the relationship to this so he can make some adequate decision about what this means. Because if you go along the side of a hill when that taking is over with, it may look a lot different than he thought it was going to look when he looked at this map and saw that these were the taking lines.

In other words, what we are saying is the fullest possible information should be given to the person whose land is being taken.

I would make one exception to this: I would not reveal the details of the appraisal. A different appraiser will arrive at the same figure by going different routes—not much, but there are differences. I think this gets down into a nitty-gritty thing that will create a great many problems for the appraiser in the community, especially if he lives there, and would really do the other person no great good. The most important information is what are the damages. If they are adequate, this is all really he has a right to know. But he does have a right to know what is being considered in terms of changes in the property while the damages are being considered.

These are comments based on 5 years of doing appraisal in this field. It is just fortunate that in this instance, the National Grange policy and those of this particular witness are in complete agreement, partly because some of the things I told the committee had something to do with the way they develop their policy.

(The complete prepared statement of Mr. Graham follows:)

I am Harry L. Graham, Legislative Representative of the National Grange. The Grange is pleased to appear before this distinguished Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations of the United States Senate in support of S. 698 which was introduced by Senator Muskie from Maine and co-sponsored by the Senators from Washington, Delaware, South Dakota and Utah.

In keeping with the present legislative language, this bill could be called the "Fair Property Rights Law", because it guarantees to the property owner losing property to the Federal government that he will receive a fair, reasonable and just return for this property. The constitutional provision for this has been repeatedly perverted to provide for the lost return which the acquiring agency could negotiate or intimidate out of the property owner. The Grange, and all Americans should be grateful, and we are, to these distinguished senators for again bringing this legislation to the attention of this Committee and through you, to this distinguished body.

This act includes the five titles of the similar bill which were approved unanimously by the Senate in 1965 and then allowed to die in the House would be resubmitted to the Senate. The Grange would have no comment on these except to state that they are well within the Grange's concept of trying to improve the utilization and assignment of such grants-in-aid and their efficient usage once they have been granted.

This bill makes provision for sound management techniques which are always badly in need and of critical importance in the effective use of the overall grant system, and there is no argument from any thoughtful and responsible person against better management of our finances and programs.