

with owners, to relieve congestion in the courts, to assure consistent treatment for owners in the many federal programs, and to promote public confidence in federal land acquisition practices, and—".

Not the least of these items is to promote public confidence in federal land acquisition practices, which at the present time is at a low water mark. Too many people have been mistreated, misled, and unjustly deprived of that which was rightfully theirs—just and fair compensation for property lost to the federal government in the interest of the general welfare.

The Grange believes that all citizens bear equal responsibility to their government. However, this does not say that we believe that some people should bear an inequitable amount of the responsibility for the general welfare. This has been the case in our federal land acquisition policy as well as in a number of states.

In relationship to paragraph 2 of section 901, which requires that a property owner should be given the opportunity to accompany the appraiser during his inspection of the property, my own experience does not indicate that there is any reason for this provision because I not only welcomed them, but found it essential in order to obtain the information which is required before an accurate appraisal can be made. It is also a matter of just plain good manners.

Apparently there has been some question raised by the failure to follow the kind of policy which we had adopted, therefore to cover those instances the Grange would support this recommendation.

The only part of this legislation which we would question would be paragraph 10 of section 901. Under the policy which we followed, such land was depreciated or the remnant of a property by as much as 90%. In other words, the property owner was paid that share of the value of the land. This then left him to negotiate the sale of the remnant with an adjacent property owner which was usually not too difficult to do.

We would suggest however, that in some instances these units are so small that it is uneconomic to keep them but it is also uneconomic to pay the cost of the transfer of the remnant of the property. If the government would have any responsibility at all at this point, it would seem to us that its responsibility should be to cover the cost of the transfer of the property, especially when it has to be sold at an extremely low price. To have the government acquire this property would mean that it also would own a lot of property adjacent to legitimate rights of way and the problem of transferring property of the Federal Government back into private hands is simply so great and so complicated that it would have a tendency to remain with the government. Most of this would have to be cared for, the fencing would have to be irregular, and the whole problem of upkeep would far outweigh any other problems including the cost of the transfer of this property to a willing buyer.

The only other suggestion which we have is that in cases where a large amount of property is taken in one area, and in those areas where there are people whose roots are deep and where for many generations people have lived, then the acquisition of comparable property becomes considerably more expensive than the value of the property which has been taken, when that value has been established by sales prior to the taking of this land and property by eminent domain. The very act of taking property creates a shortage of property in an area. Some consideration should be given, especially in terms of farm land, to compensate the individuals for a part of the increment of the price of land that is the direct result of the shortage which has been created by the federal acquisition policies. We're not sure just how this should be stated in legal language, but we believe that the Committee and its staff understand how this problem can arise and does arise and that some provision should be made for meeting this situation which should provide that the person who has lost his property may acquire property again of similar value and similar utility.

This is not quite so important in terms of single dwellings, nor is it so important in terms of business property. It is extremely important in terms of farm land, especially when that farm land is taken for purposes of inundation, because this means that in many areas the only prime farm land that is available has all been taken and the comparable land is not available at any price. The resulting financial loss to farm operators who are forced to farm marginal land and to take the loss that comes on the capitalization of their investment as a result of this, is an economic problem which needs to be considered in the final negotiations and settlement for property where this situation exists.