

One of the bills before you is H.R. 11269, which I introduced in the first session of this Congress. My bill is identical to the measure authored by my good friend and colleague, Congressman Bill Brock, who has fought hard and long for the enactment of this legislation. Identical bills were also introduced by my good friends and colleagues from Tennessee, Congressman Dan Kuykendall and Dick Fulton in the House. I am sure that everyone knows that my friend and colleague in the Senate, the distinguished Senator from Tennessee, Howard H. Baker, Jr., introduced and passed a similar bill in the Senate. I commend these fine gentlemen for their sponsorship of this much needed legislation, and I join them in their efforts for the enactment of this measure in the House.

I see Chairman Wagner of the Tennessee Valley Authority is with us this morning and I want to pay a special compliment to him and his staff for the outstanding job they are doing.

I have many happy memories here this morning. First of all, I served on the House Committee of Public Works for 2 years, and I appreciate and commend the members of this fine Subcommittee on Flood Control for the outstanding work that you are doing. I am happy to come back home this morning, to be with you, and to present my thinking on this important measure.

The benefits to the district I represent and to all other areas of Tennessee as well as to other States in the Tennessee Valley which have resulted from establishment and operation of the great TVA flood control and power system are of such magnitude as to defy adequate description. Introduction of legislation to provide jury trials in property condemnation cases is by no means intended as a criticism of the outstanding and continuing achievements of TVA. The sole purpose of this legislation is to assure property owners their traditional American right to trial by jury, when they so desire, of disputes arising out of determination of just and fair compensation for property needed by TVA in the course of its development and expansion.

Because of the nature of TVA's operations, the vast majority of such disputes result from acquisition of land which will be flooded from water impoundment or land essential for rights-of-way for transmission lines. Many times, the land and other property needed by TVA represents all or portions of small farms which the owners have toiled to establish and develop into a means of earning a livelihood. During the fiscal year ended last June 30, TVA acquired title to 45,367 acres and easements for 404 miles of transmission lines.

It would be unreasonable to assume that the negotiations required for acquisition of such a large amount of land in every case would have ended in satisfaction to all parties concerned. It would be equally unreasonable to assume that satisfactory agreements were not reached between the contracting parties in many instances.

There have been, and there will continue to be, unsuccessful negotiations and ultimate settlements which are considered to be inequitable. Since I introduced H.R. 11269 in June of last year, I have received hundreds of letters from property owners in the district I represent in support of legislation granting property owners the right to jury trial of disputes over compensation to be paid by TVA. Obviously, some of these were from individuals who feel the settlements already