

by actions of any of its Members, yet today we have a stain on the U.S. House of Representatives. We have a cloud over its existence. That is the question of the Speaker's involvement with Rupert Murdoch over the book deal.

Mr. Speaker, only 2 weeks ago, finally we had a House Ethics Committee appointed. It has not met. Nothing has been done. Yet we all know from published reports of the meetings between the Speaker, Mr. Murdoch, his lobbyists, and others, we all know that the corporations that are controlled by Mr. Murdoch have matters pending before the Federal Communications Commission.

We all know that there is possible pending legislation that would benefit Mr. Murdoch and his holdings before this House of Representatives. We should have a thorough investigation. Yet, what it appears is going on now is, there is nothing going to be done, that that committee is not going to meet.

It is not just the committee in action that concerns me. It is the fact that everyone agrees; we just heard from Mr. Wertheimer of Common Cause, who says we need an adviser for ethics outside, independent counsel, to look into this. I agree. We cannot just rely on our old Ethics Committee to examine what occurred or what did not occur.

I'm not prejudging the Speaker, but I do think that it needs a complete airing so that that stain can be removed from this House, or the cloud can be lifted, so that we can proceed with our business.

The other matter I would like to talk about is one that relates directly to this House of Representatives that I love so well. That is the fairness of each individual member to be able to propose and examine their ideas as far as legislation is concerned.

We have coming up in the next 2 weeks legislation put out by the Committee on the Judiciary so-called separate crime bills. Just today we hear that the majority proposes that on certain of those crime bills, those that are the most controversial, those that will take the longest, those that will have amendments, those that will have substitutes, they propose to limit the time that the individual Members of this body, whether Democrat or Republican, can even address the House and offer their amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the majority that they closely examine and rethink that proposal. I believe that if the majority wishes to proceed with their legislation under the 100-day calendar, if they wish to do so, to work with the minority, I am sure that you would find that many of these so-called crime bills, some, at least three or four, there is not much controversy about at all.

Those would be disposed of very rapidly, so that the time remaining could be devoted to those areas where there is diversity of opinion and not try to lump them all as the same.

I believe strongly, and as long as I am here will work to make sure that every Member, whether Democrat or Republican, has the opportunity to offer amendments to bills, to have that discussion, to have that idea brought up, and I don't believe anybody should be gagged by the majority just to expedite a matter.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO POSTPONE RECORDED VOTES ON AMENDMENTS IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, AND TO REDUCE TO 5 MINUTES INTERVENING TIME BETWEEN VOTES

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that during further consideration of H.R. 2, pursuant to House Resolution 55, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment, and that the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may reduce to not less than 5 minutes the time for voting by electronic device on any postponed question that immediately follows another vote by electronic device with intervening business, providing that the time for voting by electronic device on the first in any series of questions shall be not less than 15 minutes.

Mr. VOLKMER. Reserving the right to object, and I do not plan to object, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to know if this has been covered or at least discussed with the minority to make sure there is no objection to it. I think that is everything we were talking about earlier, so on Monday the votes could possibly be postponed until 5 o'clock.

□ 1510

Mr. ARMEY. If the gentleman will yield, yes, this and the ensuing unanimous-consent request I am about to read have both been cleared on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. VOLKMER. Can we hold that up for just a few minutes? Is it possible? I do not want to object, but will the gentleman withdraw at this time for just a few minutes?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOLEY). The request is considered as withdrawn.

CONCERN OVER USDA PROPOSED REORGANIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member strongly supports efforts to create a leaner and more efficient Federal Government. Such efforts are long overdue. However, as the U.S. Department of Agriculture moves forward with its reorganization plans, it is critical to keep in mind that reorganization simply for the sake of reorganiz-

ing is inefficient, counterproductive, and often very costly.

The use of reorganization to achieve the appearance of change is certainly not new. This Member quotes from Petronius Arbiter in the year 210 B.C.:

We trained hard * * * but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams, we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization.

This Member believes this observation of some 2200 years ago is especially relevant as the U.S. Department of Agriculture considers a reorganization plan for the new Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS]. This Member is specifically concerned about the proposed closing of the Mid-West Technical Center located in Lincoln, NE. This technical center has proven to be productive and well-located and this Member is extremely doubtful that the proposed changes are either cost-effective or will bring great efficiency.

In addition to the specific concern, this Member is also concerned that the currently proposed reorganization plan will severely and adversely impact the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The current schedule to finalize plans by May 1, 1995, with implementation of the reorganization set for October 1, 1995, needs to be placed on hold until a reevaluation is completed.

Mr. Speaker, this Member, is concerned that the charge given to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to reduce administrative staff in the Washington, DC office is being implemented in NRCS by moving many of their administrators to the six proposed regional offices. In order to make room in the budget to fund the new regional administrative staffs, the technical experts now located at the technical centers would then be sacrificed. It is this Member's belief that such a move would be very short-sighted and ultimately would undermine the technical capability and reputation of the agency.

The NRCS, formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, has earned a richly deserved reputation as a highly professional and technically competent agency. Now there appears to be a clear, and not so subtle, trend to diminish the carefully nurtured technical competence of the Service. For example, the proposed plan gives lip service to the need for technical competence while at the same time destroying the very repositories of technical skill and the knowledge, the National Technical Centers [NTC's]. The explanation for dismantling the collective technical expertise of the NRCS is not comforting. The plan calls for the duties of the NTC specialists to be taken over by the States. Yet, the States' budgets are being reduced and the State conservationists do not appear to be enthusiastic about assuming this responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, there are also suggestions to bolster technology by creating institutes of excellence at various locations throughout the country. This is a novel concept. However, in an age of integrated technology these miniature NTC's would lack synergy. This Member is afraid that in a few years someone will suggest reorganization that combines all the institutes into one or two units. They might even be called technical centers.

Mr. Speaker, this Member is also concerned about the proposed realignment of U.S. Forest Service regions to coincide with the NRCS regions because there is not that much commonality between their functions and responsibilities. This may seem like a reasonable idea for those at the undersecretary level, but it is not a good idea for the vitality and future of the NRCS. Colocation with the Forest Service would not be for the benefit of the citizen or for programs of mutual concern. The NRCS and the Forest Service clearly serve different constituencies. Because there is little overlap between the agencies' responsibilities and areas of focus, a regional division which makes sense for one of the agencies would not necessarily work for the other.

Furthermore, colocation of the NRCS with the Forest Service would, most likely, lead to the swamping of the NRCS and its programs by the larger agency. This Member believes there is a danger that the NRCS would eventually be absorbed into the larger Forest Service, rather than the two serving as coequal agencies. Also, since the Forest Service budget has been included in the Interior appropriations bill, this Member believes this is an added complication that may not have been thoroughly considered. The anticipated savings in administrative costs, as a result of colocation with the Forest Service, may also be a bit misleading since administration of the NTC's is usually a shared function between the NTC's and the State office of the NRCS.

If new administrative regions are a good idea, and they may be, then it would seem to make sense to utilize the facilities of the existing technical centers as a base of operation within the four proposed regions in which technical centers are now located. Historically, the SCS has shared locations with the ASCS, now part of the Consolidated Farm Service Agency [CFSA], because of mutual program components and for the convenience of the citizens that utilized the services. In fact, colocation of NRCS and CFSA is being required at the local level.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Member does not believe that the recently passed reorganization legislation was intended to change the mission of the old Soil Conservation Service. However, anonymous, but highly respected USDA employees have told me that NRCS officials have indicated that NRCS is no longer in the business of production agriculture! The SCS was born as a result of a calamity caused by nature and poor stewardship of the soil. The NRCS should be dedicated to assisting the private landowner in the production of food and fiber in a sustainable and conservation-friendly manner. Sweeping changes in the mission and basic structure of the NRCS should not be undertaken in haste and need the concurrence of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this Member strongly urges the USDA to carefully reexamine the current proposal to reorganize the NRCS at the national, regional, and State levels. The pro-

posed changes are, on balance, a very bad idea. I hope our distinguished former colleague, Dan Glickman, will send the USDA teams back to the drawing boards when he takes charge.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. OWENS 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 gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

COMMERCIAL SPACE ACTIVITIES ON CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from California [Mrs. SEASTRAND] is recognized for 10 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss one of the most important opportunities before the United States of America today. That opportunity lies in the commercialization of space and the development of commercial spaceports. In the coming weeks I will introduce Federal spaceport legislation, but I want to take a few minutes at this time to discuss some of the important strides the State of California, and the central coast in particular, have made in fostering the growth of commercial space.

In recent years I have been a leading proponent of commercial space activities on the central coast of California. But, well before me, there was a group of enlightened men and women who looked into the future and saw an industry that was waiting to be discovered.

Following the tragic Challenger explosion, it became increasingly clear that the long-planned shuttle launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base would not take place. In addition, between 1965 and 1986, the Air Force had spent in excess of \$5 billion for a military manned-space facility at Vandenberg. The Air Force ultimately canceled the Vandenberg shuttle program and the result was a loss of 4,000 high paying jobs. It was in this environment that a group of Lompoc community activists got together with a mission to transfer Vandenberg's shuttle facilities from Air Force to NASA control. This too failed.

The next logical step was to look forward and what they saw was the small satellite commercial space market so they applied to NASA for a center for commercial development of space at Vandenberg Air Force Base. This pursuit of NASA support and funding

seemed to be the most logical way to preserve both local capabilities and the region's growing aerospace industry. Moreover, NASA was already supporting 16 commercial launch centers across the country to the tune of \$1 million a year for each one. However, after 5 years of vigorous pursuit, it became clear that NASA had little interest in funding technology development west of the Rockies.

In 1991, with the assistance of then-Congressman Bob Lagomarsino, Vice President Quayle visited Vandenberg and saw first hand its commercial space capabilities. In addition, he significantly raised its profile. The Vice President commented that America had entered a new phase in space launches that would bring an increase in the importance of commercial launch.

In the subsequent months, the Air Force made a recommendation to Motorola that Vandenberg be used as the launch site for their Iridium satellites—a potential \$2.3 billion project as it was originally outlined. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, Motorola concluded that Vandenberg would not be a suitable site and the United States was faced with a half-billion loss in booster sales to France.

Through the efforts of local activists, specifically a determined community, State, Air Force, and congressional lobbying campaign, Motorola reversed its decision on Vandenberg. They signed \$1.1 billion in satellite and booster contracts with American companies Lockheed and McDonnell Douglas.

The decision by Motorola was a critical step on the road to turning what could have been a several billion dollar white elephant at Vandenberg Air Force Base into a commercial space launch facility with tremendous economic potential.

Mr. Speaker, when I was elected to the California State Assembly in 1990, I took an active role in promoting commercial space activities along the central coast of California. This included bringing these issues to the attention of Sacramento lawmakers. In 1993, I introduced legislation which designated the Western Commercial Space Center as the California Spaceport Authority. In addition, we supported the establishment of a commercial space office within the California Department of Transportation to serve as an advocate and watchful eye for available Federal resources. We also worked to obtain a sales tax exemption for qualified property used in launches from Vandenberg Air Force Base. Gov. Pete Wilson, a commercial space supporter, earmarked \$350,000 in 1993 matching funds.

In 1994, I introduced legislation to expand the charter of the California Spaceport Authority to encompass responsibility for development of regional technology alliances, legislation, and determinations concerning