The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOEHNER). Pursuant to the previous order of the House, the resolution is considered as adopted.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, 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 addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON-LEE SALUTES THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE WHICH CELEBRATES ITS NEW FACILITY WITH GRAND OPENING GALAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize and salute the grand opening of the Ensemble Theatre in Houston, TX. Today, Friday, September 12, kicks-off The Grand Opening Galas, a weekend of performances, receptions, and entertainment that will be inspiring and fun for the entire community. As a longstanding supporter of the Ensemble Theatre, it brings me great pleasure to honor the theatre today.

The Ensemble Theatre is the oldest and most distinguished professional theatre in the Southwest devoted to the African-American experience. Founded in 1976 by the late George Hawkins, this nonprofit organization was established to preserve African-American artistic expression. Out of a sense of frustration with the limited number of theatre opportunities for blacks, Hawkins used his own financial resources to found the theatre. He assembled a group of black artists dedicated to producing and presenting theatre to Houston's black community. Today, I rise to share and build upon his important legacy.

In the grandest of styles and with pomp and pageantry that will include Houston's community and civic leaders, the Theatre opens the doors today to its new facility. Indeed, I am pleased to be associated with a campaign that began in 1993 to raise funds for the new facility. Nearly $4 million has been generously donated by 20 foundations, 35 corporations, and 150 individuals, as well as the great city of Houston and the National Endowment for the Arts, headed by Jane Alexander.

As the U.S. Representative of the 18th Congressional District in which the Ensemble sits, I am proud to commend this artistic jewel reflecting African-American lifestyles on good theatre for all of Houston. I look forward to bringing Jane Alexander to Houston to showcase this great House of theatre so that all the world will know of one of our prized possession in the midst of Houston's great art institutions. Congratulation to all the Ensemble Family.

THE NEW WORLD MINE

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I want to visit for a few minutes with my colleagues, about a matter that is referred to as the New World Mine. Members may be aware of or have heard about this.

The President asked for $65 million to be inserted in the Interior budget under the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the purposes of executing an agreement that he entered into on August 12, 1996. This was an agreement that was negotiated in secret. It was negotiated behind closed doors with representatives of the White House, representatives of an environmental group, and representatives of a mining company.

What it basically called for is the exchange of 65 million dollars worth of public land in Montana in exchange for the rights to mine a project called the New World Mine, which is located about 3 miles northeast of Yellowstone Park.

This caused quite an uproar, Mr. Speaker, in Montana, because the people of Montana did not take kindly that the President of the United States would be giving away 65 million dollars worth of the public land in Montana. Sportsmen's groups, environmental groups, and just ordinary citizens who are very used, to and accustomed to, using the public lands became very disturbed.

So the President then decided that he had to come up with another alternative, so he proposed taking $65 million out of the Conservation Reserve Program. I would remind my colleagues that the Conservation Reserve Program is a program that takes environmentally sensitive lands out of production and puts them into grasses, and is very popular among the environmental community and the sportsmen's community, and has helped the farm communities in many parts of the drier parts of the West. Again, this group expressed outrage, because those are very valuable programs.

So finally the President came to the Congress and said, give me a blank check. Let me execute this arrangement. The House of Representatives, Mr. Speaker, said no. It said no because the President's plan is fatally flawed. I would like to explain to my colleagues why that is. It is fatally flawed for two primary reasons.

First, the President decided to ignore two very important parties. One of those parties is the State of Montana. The other party is a woman and her name is Margaret Reeb. Who is Margaret Reeb? It turns out that Margaret Reeb is the individual who owns the mineral interests that this group of people met together and decided to sell out.

Mr. Speaker, if I could liken this to an example, it would be like having your neighbor come to you and say, you know, someone came to me and offered me a lot of money to buy my house, but they said, I will not buy your house unless I can get your neighbor's house, too, so your neighbor sold your house from underneath you. That is basically what happened, because Margaret Reeb was never contacted, she was never consulted, and she never made any agreements.

I will to enter into the RECORD, Mr. Speaker, a copy of an article, a story in Time, May 12, 1997. In it Margaret Reeb says she is not going to play ball with the President. She says, "I knew nothing about" the negotiations. "When I finally got a copy of the agreement, I practically went into shock." Had any of the parties approached her, she said, she would have informed them, well, I am not interested in selling my property.

At the end of the day, she says, she does not give a damn whether or not the thing gets mined, she just wants to keep her property. There is a concern with that, because according to this article, Kathy McGinty, the chairwoman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, says ominously, "There are other ways for us to arrange this agreement," suggesting they could leave Margaret Reeb's real estate an island in a sea of Government property that would have no value.

So the secret deal, made behind closed doors, left out the public. There were no hearings. The President had no authority and, certainly, no appropriation. Even more important, Mr. Speaker, is, it interrupted what we call the NEPA process, the National Environmental Policy Act process.

There was an environmental impact statement that was in the process. The White House says the environmental impact statement was not near completion, but I want my colleagues to look here, because I have a copy of the draft, copy of the environmental impact statement, which I will not ask to be put in the RECORD, but it was near completion. That environmental impact statement addressed the environmental concerns this mine might have represented.

Why did the President announce on August 12, 1996, this deal, when he did not have the property owner even on board? It turns out, Mr. Speaker, that August 12, 1996, was the first day of the Republican National Convention. The President used this opportunity to upstage the convention.

I am not opposed to it because of that; I am opposed to it because it is a wrong deal. The deal is wrong. The deal seeks to steal Margaret Reeb's property, and it seeks to hurt the State of Montana. GAO says the impacts would be that Montana would lose 321 direct jobs, 145 indirect jobs, and about 100 million dollars worth of tax revenues, should this mine go forward.

Mr. Speaker, I have offered an alternative plan, a plan that will protect Margaret Reeb's property rights and protect the taxpayers of Montana, and I urge my colleagues to become familiar with it.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following article.

The material referred to is as follows:

[From Time, May 12, 1997]

NOBODY ASKED HER

A VERY HUMAN, VERY STUBBORN GLITCH IN THE YELLOWSTONE GOLD-MINING DEAL

(By Patrick Dawson)

Margaret Reeb is somewhere in her 80's. In her Livingston, Mont., sitting room stands an ancient upright piano. On a wall hangs a photograph of Reeb and a smiling Eleanor Roosevelt. The topic of her verse—the mountain's beauty, the nobility of the pioneer gold miners who wrested their destinies from it—is a variation on an old frontier theme. Were she merely a wistful ex-schoolteacher, one could dismiss Reeb as a member of a familiar but vanishing species: the Western romantic.

But as things stand, it would be imprudent. Because Reeb, although she did teach school for decades, does not merely admire the forget-me-nots on the sides of Montana's Henderson Mountain; she owns the rights to millions of dollars in gold ore lying somewhere beneath it. Ore that President Clinton vowed publicly would never be mined. But about which he may have spoken too soon. For Margaret Reeb is not simply the eccentric heroine in her own romantic western. A bona-fide scion of the mining heroes she celebrates, she has the financial leverage to throw a shudder into the massive federal machinery she believes would grind up their dream.

It has been nine months since Clinton played federal marshal in the Great Yellowstone Mine Shootout. The dispute began in the late 1980s as new techniques for locating pay dirt suddenly turned old claims on Henderson into a $1 billion lode of extractable ore. The glitch was that the peak is a scant 2.5 miles upstream from Yellowstone National Park. Environmental groups, warning that a megamine would poison the park's ecosystem, threatened massive lawsuits against Crown Butte, the company planning a round-the-clock extraction effort. Then the Administration stepped in, and after months of secret talks, Crown Butte agreed to swap the mine for $65 million worth of government holdings elsewhere. Clinton was able to upstage the first day of the Republican Convention last August by posing in a beautiful alpine meadow flanked by an environmentalist and a mining executive, announcing that ''Yellowstone is more precious than gold.''

But a key figure was absent from that photo op. Margaret Reeb spent the summers of her girlhood on Henderson's slopes, where her father supervised a mine. Her family has owned claims in the district for over a century. ''It was gold seekers who settled the West,'' she notes crisply. ''They built the churches; they built the towns.'' Her purchase of dozens of nonproducing Henderson claims over 50 years probably struck some as more sentimental than savvy. But now her holdings, on lease to Crown Butte, constitute at least 40% of its goldfield—a portion so large that the pact is specifically contingent on her selling her rights to the company so that they can be part of the exchange.

But Reeb will not play ball. ''I knew nothing about the negotiations,'' she claims. ''And when I finally got a copy of the agreement, I practically went into shock.'' Had any of the parties approached her, she says, she would have informed them, ''Well, I'm not interested in selling my property.'' In part the stance is just age-old miner's shrewdness: Don't sell your stake unless it's running out. But her rebuff also reflects a century of skirmishing between Western miners and the feds: ''We Montanans feel pretty strongly about our love of the land,'' she says. ''It is not American to be trying to wipe out selective private property.''

The head of Crown Butte's new corporate parent has come calling at least twice since August, entreating her cooperation. But Reeb does not seem receptive to his blandishments. David Rovig, a former Crown Butte head who spent years talking her into leasing her claims to the company, doubts she will sell. ''At the end of the day,'' he says, ''Margaret doesn't give a damn whether the thing gets mined or not. She wants her property.''

That may be all she ends up with. Katie McGinty, the chairwoman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, says ominously, ''There are other ways for us to arrange this agreement.'' One might involve Crown Butte's swapping only the land it owns, leaving Reeb's real estate an island in a sea of government property. Although her underground holdings are vast, her actual surface lot may be too small to accommodate a large-scale extraction operation.

Meanwhile, other problems have come up. Since signing the agreement, the Administration has not found any politically acceptable properties for a swap. It may have to try to pry $65 million out of a Republican Congress through deferred agricultural subsidies. By comparison, Margaret Reeb could come to seem a pushover.

PROTECTING AMERICA'S PATENT RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRABACHER] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH].

OUR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM IS GOING BROKE

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk straightforwardly about what I think is one of the greatest problems facing this country, and that is the fact that Social Security is going broke. Mr. Speaker, we are now looking at a situation where there is going to be less money coming in from the taxes charged to workers than the amount of the dollars going out in benefit payments.

When we started this program in 1935, it was started as a pay-as-you-go program that cannot be sustained. It was started as a program charging workers a 1-percent tax, and then paying a very meager, a very small benefit to retirees once they reached the age of 65. However, most retirees at that time did not reach the age of 65. The average age of death in 1935 was 61 years old. That meant that most people never got any Social Security benefits, but simply paid into it.

We have now developed, with this pay-as-you-go problem, where we have constantly solved the shortage of funds to pay benefits by increasing taxes. So what we have done, since 1971, we have increased the taxes, Social Security taxes, on workers 36 times, more often than once a year. We are going to end up with generational warfare. We cannot continue to make workers today pay more and more money in to pay for the benefits of existing retirees.

When I go to my town hall meetings in Jackson and Battle Creek and in Hillsdale and Adrian, people say, look, if you would keep the Government's cotton-picking hands out of the money in the trust fund, we would be all right. But let me tell the Members how much money is in that trust fund, and how long it would last. The trust fund only uses the surpluses coming in in Social Security taxes. In other words, when there is money left over after benefits are paid out, then it goes into the trust fund.

Now the trust fund has roughly $600 billion of IOU's. Even if the Government came up with the money to pay back that $600 billion, it would not last 2 years. It would last less than 2 years. So that is not the solution, but it is part of the solution.

I think what we have to face up to is that this is a tremendous political challenge. There are only two ways, or a combination of the two, to save Social Security and keep it solvent. That is to increase the revenues coming in, or reduce the benefits going out. The longer we delay, the longer we put off coming up with a solution, the more drastic that solution is going to be.

Dorcas Hardy, a former Commissioner for Social Security, estimates that we are going to have less money than is needed to pay benefits, as early as 2005. The official date according to the actuary at the Social Security Administration is probably going to be closer to 2011 or 2012, but it is still a huge problem.

When we started back in the 1940's, what we had is 42 people working, paying in their Social Security taxes, to come up with the money for each retiree. By 1950, we got down to 17 workers working and paying in their taxes to support each retiree. Today, Mr. Speaker, guess how many people are working today, paying in their taxes, to support each retiree? Three. The estimate now is that by 2027 there will only be two workers working and paying in their taxes to support each retiree. There need to be some changes. We need to face up to it.

It should not be a commission. We have had many commissions. Ned Gramlich, who I have known for years, from the University of Michigan, of course led the President's effort 2 years ago with his commission, looking at what we should do with Social Security. They could not agree. A majority of that commission could not agree on any one solution, so what they brought back was three different solutions.

I asked Ned when we were in a Social Security forum together if he thought it was reasonable to appoint yet another commission, and he rolled his eyes back and said, absolutely not. We