The bill is Miller's ''legacy,'' says one of its opponents, Dan Nelson, executive director of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority.

''He is thought to be the father of that legislation. It has fundamentally changed the way we do business. Some of it good and needed and some of it, frankly, punitive or inequitable.''

The Miller-Bradley bill overhauled the distribution of federal water in California.

Farmers lost the open-ended contracts for cheap water and now face tiered pricing that encourages conservation. For the first time, using water to restore fish life in San Francisco Bay and the Delta became a priority.

Many California farmers hate the bill, which dramatically drove up their water costs. And they blame Miller.

''He's got a long history of vilifying and terrorizing agriculture, which has given him a bigger-than-life place in the eyes of farmers,'' says Jason Peltier, manager of Central Valley Water Project Association.

Though Peltier has fought Miller for years, he admires the political skills the congressman displayed as he masterfully pushed through the bill.

The water reforms weren't left by themselves in the legislation, but packaged with dozens of major projects for 16 Western states. The lessons from Miller's mentor were being used.

''We needed the ornaments on the Christmas tree,'' Lawrence says. ''We learned a great deal at Phil Burton's knee.''

CLINTON CLASHING

Those were heady times for Miller. He had just ascended to chairman of the House Interior Committee, the post Burton had held until his death in 1983.

With Bill Clinton's defeat of President Bush in 1992, Miller was about to lead the House's environmental committee while his party controlled Congress and held the presidency.

Miller was even being mentioned as a possible interior secretary in the new Democratic administration. He took himself out of the running, however, saying he didn't want the post.

It's unlikely he would have fit in. The Clinton administration has been a disappointment to him on environmental issues.

''They get a little weak in the knees when the pressure gets turned up,'' Miller says.

Most recently, Miller was sharply critical of a Clinton administration decision to weaken the standards for labeling tuna ''dolphin-safe.'' Miller, who fought for the original standards, says the latest move will increase the number of dolphin caught in tuna nets.

''You have to look at all of this on a continuum,'' he says. ''The clock doesn't run out and you win or lose. Things ebb and flow in politics, and that's what makes it frustrating to some extent because it's never static.''

A HAVEN IN MARTINEZ

Miller is also in continuous motion.

He usually rises Monday morning in Martinez, gets on a plane and heads for Washington. Barring a congressional trip to Brazil, Japan or the Northern Mariana Islands, come Thursday night or Friday, he returns to the district.

That's the way he's done it for the past 25 years. For a few years, his family lived with him in Washington, but his late hours during the week and the need to be back in the district on the weekend led to even less time together.

During that period, the family bought the Washington row house, where Miller still stays when he is in the capital.

The two-bedroom, two-story, pale green brick house with the chipped paint and overgrown front yard in the middle of urban Washington is a striking contrast to Miller's suburban Martinez home nestled under towering trees.

Martinez is his sanctuary. ''It really is the one place where I can just relax,'' he says, ''because I know on Sunday night or Monday morning I have to get back on an airplane and go back to Washington.''

The house is just down the road from the house he grew up in. His mother, now in her mid-80s, still lives nearby. The house is also where his two boys grew up.

They're both grown now. In 1996, the oldest, George Miller IV, tried to follow his father and grandfather by running for the Assembly. He lost in the Democratic primary to Contra Costa County Supervisor Tom Torlakson, whose campaign slogan was ''His own record, his own name.''

Once again, a young Miller was beaten because voters felt he had little to offer other than a family name.

THE FUTURE

Certainly, that can no longer be said of the congressman. At a time when many Democrats can only win by moving to the center, Miller clings to his liberal roots.

''He has never apologized for it.'' says Lawrence. ''He has never taken to the term progressive.''

Although he's been in Congress nearly 25 years, he's relatively young for a senior congressman. The 17 House members who have been there longer are all at least 60.

On the other hand, his mentors—his dad, Burton, Moscone and Coffey—are all dead. And Miller is the same age his father was when he suddenly died from a heart attack.

It all makes him think about his future. Sitting with his sleeves rolled up and his tie loose as he adds hot sauce to his enchilada at a restaurant half a block from his Washington home, he reflects on life in the capital.

''The loneliness factor, the empty house factor, it just wears on you,'' he says. ''But with all the stress and the strain and the long hours, I still think it's worth it.''

Miller still loves to be a political player. He ticks off the issues he had worked on that very day: child labor and sweatshops, sugar subsidies, the war in Kosovo, Sierra forests, Delta water, education standards.

''I've never taken the honor of being a member of Congress lightly,'' he says. ''It is a privilege. It's what makes me get up in the morning and go to work, knowing in one fashion or another you're going to get to be a participant in our Democratic system. It sounds really corny, except it's really energizing.''

The bottom line is that there's no sign Miller will retire any time soon. Indeed, he's making plans for the next phase of his congressional career.

Rep. William Clay, D-Mo., the ranking Democrat on the Education and the Workforce Committee, announced last month that this will be his last term. Miller is in line to succeed him, to lead the Democrat's education agenda in the House. And to become committee chairman if Democrats win back a majority. Miller has put out word he wants the job.

But to get it he will have to give up his ranking position on the Resources Committee. Central Valley water leaders are quietly gleeful.

''I'm excited for him to go pursue other areas,'' Peltier says. ''It also excites me that if the Democrats take control of Congress again, he won't be breathing fire on us immediately.''

Nelson concurs. ''Someone will just have to warn all the education people just what they're in for. It will not be status quo.''

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM TURNER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 50, I was absent because of my participation in a congressional delegation trip to Russia with members of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Research and Development for the purpose of discussing with the Russian Duma pending anti-missile defense Legislation. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on H.R. 819.

INDIAN COLONEL: TROOPS ''DYING LIKE DOGS''

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, all of us have been following with alarm the Indian attack on the Kashmiri freedom fighters at Kargil and Dras. India has been losing many of its troops in this desperate effort to crush the freedom movements within its borders. Casualties are mounting. The soldiers they sent to discharge this dirty war are demoralized. According to the Associated Press, an Indian colonel said that Indian troops ''are dying like dogs.'' A corporal is quoted as saying ''Even in war we don't have such senseless casualties.''

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, most of these troops are Sikhs and other minorities sent to die for India's effort to suppress the freedom of all the minorities. These Sikh troops should not be fighting for India; they should be working to free their own country.

Now there has been a new deployment of troops in Punjab. A mass exodus from villages in Punjab is underway because the villagers are justifiably afraid that India's war against the freedom movements will spread to their homeland.

India reportedly also used chemical weapons in this conflict, despite being a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention. India has a record of escalating the situation with regard to weapons of mass destructions. India began the nuclear arms race in South Asia by conducting underground nuclear tests.

There are steps that we can take to make sure that this conflict does not spread and that all the peoples and nations of South Asia are allowed to live in freedom. We should impose strict sanctions on India, the aggressor in this conflict. We should stop providing American aid to India and we should support a free and fair vote on national self-determination not only in Kashmir, Punjab (Khalistan), Nagaland, and the other countries held by India.

I thank my friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh for bringing this situation to my attention, and I urge India to allow the basic human right of national self-determination to all the people of South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I place the Associated Press article on the conflict in the RECORD.

''WE ARE DYING LIKE DOGS,'' SAID ONE [INDIAN ARMY] COLONEL

BLACK MOOD HOVERS OVER KASHMIR

(By Hema Shukla)

DRASS, KASHMIR—June 11, 1999 (AP): On the eve of talks aimed at ending a month of