

I also want to say a word of appreciation to my senior colleague in the Senate, Senator Mundt. As the chairman has said, he will play a key role in getting appropriations for this project. But, he has been working over the years on the authorization, as has Congressman Berry and Congressman Reifel, who will testify later on, along with our Governor, Governor Boe.

One of the most persuasive aspects of this entire Oahe development project from the very beginning has been the bipartisan spirit in which we approached it. Senator Mundt is the only member of the delegation who was here at the time of the Flood Control Act of 1944 when this project first got its authorization, but all of us have been working together through the years for the authorization of this very important project which is so vital to the future of South Dakota.

If I could take just one more moment, I would like to express my appreciation to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Kenneth Holum. He has been the moving spirit behind getting this project on its way to construction. He is the man who broke it loose and moved it through administrative channels. We will be hearing from him a little later on this morning.

The authorization in Senate bill 6 to begin construction of the Oahe irrigation project has been more than a quarter of a century reaching this committee. As has been said the Oahe project was included in the blanket Missouri River development program authorized in the Flood Control Act of 1944.

Because of major changes in many project plans, however, Congress passed an act in 1964 requiring the reauthorization of all Missouri Basin projects. That is why we are before the committee now, although we probably would have been regardless of the 1964 act since it has been the Bureau of Reclamation's policy to submit these major projects to the Congress without regard to the 1944 authorization.

The Oahe project is the biggest development project on South Dakota's economic horizon today, as it has been for many years. Eastern South Dakota, where it is located, lies between the humid center of the Mississippi Valley and the semiarid outer reaches. Rainfall and agricultural crop production are uncertain. We have lost many crops as a result of drought; farmers have suffered, and the communities which are dependent on agriculture have suffered with them, in both dry and semidry years.

These conditions have, over the years, eroded the expectations of those who settled in South Dakota on the assumption that its fertile soil would bring forth a bountiful harvest year after year, unmindful of the many dry years. They and their heirs have undergone acute economic problems as a consequence. Our population has been nearly static for many years, and there has been a high outmigration of younger people looking for greater opportunity.

We have, for at least two generations, envisioned the Oahe irrigation project as one major way to bring stability to central and eastern South Dakota. Men such as my predecessor in the Senate, the late Francis Case, former Gov. M. Q. Sharp, the late Bob Lusk, Pierre editor Bob Hipple, and many, many other people from our State for years have seen the possibilities of irrigation development.