

In both States—and we went into this in considerable detail at the time of the Garrison hearings—the people in the towns and on the land, because of the type of climate that we have and the undependable rainfall in these high plain States, are forced to depend to too great an extent for their own good and the National interest, upon the production of cereal grains.

The Garrison diversion unit and the Oahe unit will provide the opportunity for farmers in eastern North Dakota and eastern South Dakota to switch from an economy dependent essentially upon the production of cereal grains to the production of livestock and livestock feeds which are much more urgently needed in the economy today. I am convinced, and the Congress agreed with respect to the Garrison diversion unit, that this is not only in the interest of the States affected but in the national interest.

The Garrison unit and Oahe unit are similar, too, in that North and South Dakota are areas which provide a substantial portion of the migratory water fowl that are produced domestically in the United States. Both the Garrison diversion unit and Oahe unit provide a unique opportunity to enhance wildlife, particularly migratory waterfowl, in our country, not only for the benefit of the people up and down the central flyway but all over the United States.

I think this Congress and this committee is too diligent to be satisfied with such a short statement. You want to know, and it is my obligation to provide to you specific information with respect to the Oahe unit and what it will do, what its physical features are, how it will operate and what the Department of Interior has done to make sure that this project as we bring it before you is in compliance with the law and policies which have been established by the Congress of the United States with respect to water resource development.

With that in mind, I will turn to my prepared statement. Before I do, I want to say to you that ordinarily when I come before you to discuss reclamation projects I have with me the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation or an Assistant Commissioner to talk about the technical features of the project.

In this instance, both Commissioner Dominy and Assistant Commissioner Stamm are out of the country. I will take that responsibility myself. I think I do know something about the physical features of this particular project. I do have with me at the table Jim Casey, the Acting Chief of the Project Development Division of the Bureau of Reclamation here in Washington; Harold Aldrich, our Regional Director from Billings, Mont., and Preston Funkhouser, from the Project Development Office in Huron, S. Dak.

Now I will proceed to the prepared statement.

The original act provided for irrigation of 750,000 acres west of the James River between Huron and Aberdeen. More detailed studies of the soils, however, indicated that the area should be adjusted to include all of the silt soils in the lakebed of prehistoric glacial Lake Dakota along the east and west sides of the James River, and that lands with glacial till soils to the south and west of the lakebed should be dropped because they were not suitable for irrigation under then existing criteria.

In essence, the Oahe unit was shifted east and northward and the irrigable area in the James River Valley was reduced from 750,000