

Oahe unit. The principal benefit of this development, as indicated earlier in my statement, would be the diversification, intensification, and stabilization of the agricultural production and net farm income of the area and its concomitant effect on employment and income of the business and industrial economy.

In that respect, I think, as far as the Garrison diversion unit in North Dakota is concerned, that a dependable supply of livestock forage in the central area of the State is not only going to affect the agricultural economy of the acres actually brought under irrigation, but the effect will be much broader across the whole State. This would also be the case in South Dakota with the development of the Oahe unit.

The initial stage of the Oahe unit is a desirable resource development. It would strengthen the economy of the area, State, and Nation. It is engineeringly feasible and economically justified. The estimated total annual benefits exceed annual costs by a ratio of 2.5 to 1. Development of the initial stage is compatible with future development of the ultimate plan.

Its development would fulfill a longstanding obligation to the State of South Dakota which gave up over a half-million acres of its agricultural land for the mainstem reservoirs which have been providing flood protection and other benefits to other regions of the Missouri Basin for many years now.

Irrigation districts have been formed, and the local people, from the Governor on down through and including the individual water users, have demonstrated their sincere willingness to assume the obligations imposed by this undertaking.

We are, therefore, confident that the necessary degree of local desire is present and that no appreciable difficulty will be encountered from this standpoint.

The Department recognizes that this is a substantial undertaking. It is daring and imaginative in concept. The time required to attain its full development will exceed our lifetime. The amount of money and effort involved will be considerable.

However, we cannot fail to recognize our responsibility to the future. We should initiate this program at the earliest reasonable date. We believe the plan is soundly conceived, eminently justified, and represents a logical step in an orderly program of natural resource conservation and use.

On behalf of the Department of the Interior and the administration, I recommend prompt and favorable approval of this measure.

Mr. Chairman, it has been a pleasure to present the views of the administration with respect to this project. I will be pleased to submit any further information you may request.

Senator BURDICK. Thank you, Mr. Holum. I just have a few questions.

One of the questions we heard most frequently during the Garrison period was, Why do you wish to spend taxpayers' money to develop a project like this when we have overproduction in this country of various crops?

As I look at the map on the wall, I find the areas to be irrigated are already in production. Is that not correct?

Mr. HOLUM. The lands are all in production.