

The degree of support can be best measured by a number of decisions made by the local people during the past 7 years. Many of these decisions resulted from referendums which allowed those directly concerned to freely express their opinions. The first of these was in 1960 and resulted in the formation of the subdistrict.

As stated earlier, the subdistrict was organized by a favorable vote in excess of 85 percent. Every elector within the subdistrict qualified to vote at the general election was entitled to vote on the question. It was interesting to note that the percentage of favorable vote by counties ranged from a low of 76.1 percent to a high of 93 percent.

The prime stimulus for the formation of the subdistrict was the desire of the local people to create an entity to represent them in the negotiation of contracts with the Federal Government and for the operation of the Oahe unit.

In January of 1965, farmers directly concerned indicated they were anxious to proceed with the Oahe unit when they formed two irrigation districts. These two districts located in Brown and Spink Counties encompass a majority of the irrigable land to be served through the first stage development.

The organization of these two districts was approved by an affirmative vote exceeding 80 percent. Only those who owned 10 or more acres of land within the district were eligible to vote. The lands included in the districts were done so on a voluntary basis. Those who desired to exclude their lands were permitted to do so.

We are now finding that many who initially asked that their lands be withdrawn are petitioning the irrigation district boards of directors to have them placed back into the districts.

Once again local people demonstrated their support when at the 1966 general election they granted the subdistrict the authority to enter into contracts with the United States and others to assist with the continued development of the Oahe unit and other water resources projects within its boundaries.

Everyone within the 15½-county area comprising the subdistrict qualified to vote at the general election was eligible to vote on this question. Voters approved the granting of such authority by the overall vote of 75.1 percent. The question carried in all counties by at least a 60-percent majority, well over the 50 percent required for passage.

A breakdown of the vote shows that it carried by 70.1 percent in rural areas and by 77.8 percent in the urban areas. Approval of the question authorized the subdistrict board of directors to levy up to a full mill on all taxable property within the subdistrict in support of such contracts. Up until that time a one-tenth mill levy was the maximum.

In addition, support for the project has been demonstrated by the South Dakota Legislature when during both the 1966 and 1967 session it adopted concurrent resolutions urging early authorization of the Oahe unit.

Interest in receiving project water to irrigate lands outside of the presently formed irrigation districts has also been voiced. The subdistrict has received petitions signed by landowners expressing their desire to irrigate with project water taken directly from main supply systems, deliveries to be made only as long as excess water exists in the system.