Our present rural membership of 2,500, and the many expected new members, will be vitally affected by irrigation. A new, modern headquarters building, with an excellent staff, is ready to expand its services to facilitate and speed the development of irrigation, and related businesses in the Oahe project area.

Northern Electric has the capabilities of contributing greatly to the progress and development of this historic project once it is authorized by the Congress. It can furnish the extra power, and technical skills needed in this field. Irrigation will help Northern Electric, and Northern Electric will help irrigation.

My everyday business is the operation of a livestock farm where registered, Polled Hereford cattle for seed stock are produced, the feeding of cattle for market, and the production of feed for my cattle operation.

After being on four irrigation tours in Nebraska, the great advantages of bringing water to the land became readily apparent to me. There seemed no limitation to the potential production of the land where irrigation was being practiced.

While I was a student at South Dakota State University, the soils professor stated that the James River Valley had one of three finest soils in the world. So we have the No. 1 basic ingredient for successful irrigation. With adequate water, it will contribute greatly to the area economy and Northern Electric territory.

The James River runs through my farm. Although it is a rather uncertain supply of water, I decided to try to irrigate from it. In 1965 I leveled 50 acres of land. In 1966 this 50 acres was irrigated along with 15 acres that did not need leveling. This year another 40 acres was leveled and planted to corn, making a total of 105 acres under irrigation. I will add another 40 acres to this unit at a later date.

The results of my 1966 corn production under irrigation was highly productive and encouraging, and proved beyond a doubt that irrigation, even in a wet season, will increase yields up to 40 percent. However, since late June of 1967, after having produced a record small grain crop, much of the Midwest has been under most severe drought conditions, and here is where water really tells a tale.

While most of the corn in the Oahe project area is in only fair to very poor condition, my irrigated corn has a yield potential of well over 100 bushels per acre. It will yield 20 or more tons of the highest quality silage per acre. On the other hand, dryland corn will yield 3 to 4 tons of fair quality silage and will yield from 10 to 25 bushels per acre of shelled corn.

Tame grass and Sudan pastures could be irrigated to provide sure and dependable pastures for cattle and sheep. Alfalfa could be irrigated to insure a hay crop. The terrible dread of lingering and devastating drought could be nearly a thing of the past.

It is extremely important to me to know that I can produce enough feed each year without too much worry. It will not be necessary with irrigation to wait until the end of the summer to know how many breeding cattle I can carry through the winter or how many cattle can be fattened for market each year.