

trouble in this regard, especially after the report that the Secretary of the Interior Holum gave this morning on the economics of it.

I am sure that these farmers will feel that they are reasonable contracts. We hope there will be no difficulty in this regard.

With that, I will conclude my remarks, unless you have some questions.

Senator McGOVERN. Living, as you do, in the irrigation area, you are a good person to report on the sentiment of public support for the project. We appreciate your statement.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

(The prepared statement referred to follows:)

STATEMENT OF WALTER JOHNSON, SECRETARY, SPINK COUNTY IRRIGATION BOARD
OF DIRECTORS

Honorable Members of the Senate Subcommittee, my name is Walter Johnson, a farmer in Spink County, living south of Frankfort, and Secretary of the Spink County Irrigation District Board of Directors. I wish to make the following statements on behalf of the Irrigation District Board and in support of the Oahe Irrigation Development.

We believe that our people are definitely interested in the development of this important project, and that they have taken the necessary steps to indicate this interest, and when necessary, voted favorably by large majorities. I refer particularly to:

1. Formation of the Oahe Conservancy Sub District at the general election of 1960 by an 87% favorable vote—this represents about 22% of both land and people of this state.
2. Formation of the Spink County Irrigation District by special election in January, 1965, by a favorable vote of about 82%. The Board, incidentally, was organized in April of 1965.
3. Granting of Contract Authority to the Board of Directors at the general election in November, 1966, by a favorable vote of 79.6%.

Also, the testimony of numerous area farmers at the recent Senate Subcommittee Hearings held at Redfield, South Dakota, in May would indicate the interest on the part of our people to get started on this project.

Almost every crop season we experience drought periods of varying lengths and I would like to point out that in the years 1959, 1964, and 1966, Spink County was declared a feed and grazing disaster area by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

That our farmers are aware of the need for irrigation is evidenced by the fact that about sixty irrigators have (when suitable water has been available) developed irrigation systems on some 10,000 to 12,000 acres in Spink County. Of this number, only three or four of these farms are within the proposed Irrigation District.

If the Oahe development is to become a reality, the next steps are:

1. Congressional approval and authorization for construction.
2. Completion of Master Contracts and Participating Contracts between the Irrigation District and the United States government.
3. Another vote on this contract by the people within the Irrigation Districts directly involved.

We, the members of the Spink County Irrigation Board, firmly believe that the people will again give their support for the irrigation project, and will vote favorably on these re-payment contracts, if they are fair and reasonable.

It is our belief that the development of this project will act as a deterrent to the exodus of farmers and other rural people from this area to ever crowded urban centers.

On behalf of the Spink County Irrigation District, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration and support of this project and its early approval by the Congress of the United States. I wish to thank you for this opportunity to express our support.