

commerce; 41 banks and financial institutions, and the five largest daily newspapers in the State. In addition, the membership includes individual businessmen and farmers, equipment distributors, livestock processing plants, auction sales rings, wholesalers and retailers, active irrigators, and interested individuals.

Our association has maintained an active interest in the development of the Oahe irrigation unit since it was originally authorized in 1944. Although they have waited 23 years for this project to be initiated, our people continue to be enthusiastic about the economic stability it will provide for the entire State.

We wholeheartedly supported the exchange of more than one-half million acres of our best Missouri River bottom land for the promise of much greater economic and recreation benefits that will accrue from the development of the Oahe Reservoir and the Oahe irrigation unit.

Our association supported, and helped write, State legislation that authorized formation of the Oahe Conservancy subdistrict. We helped to explain to the people of a 15½-county area the necessity for the formation of this district. And in 1960 the people demonstrated their understanding of this necessity by an overwhelming 85.5 percent affirmative vote.

We actively supported the organization of irrigation districts in 1965.

Again last fall we assisted in presenting the case for contractual authority for the subdistrict board and an increase in the mill levy within the entire district, to enable the subdistrict to guarantee its obligations to the Federal Government toward operation and maintenance of the Oahe irrigation unit. Again the people responded with an enthusiastic 75 percent yes vote.

In October of 1967 the South Dakota Reclamation and Water Development Association will observe its 30th birthday. We are hopeful that in this anniversary year we may also celebrate the final authorization of the Oahe irrigation unit, the project that has been the major goal of this association during most of its 30-year existence.

I respectfully ask your favorable consideration and approval of the legislation proposed by Senate bill 6.

Senator McGovern. Thank you ever so much.

Senator Burdick has a question.

Senator Burdick. Getting back to the 500,000 acres of land that is taken for reservoir purposes, your statement is that it's for Oahe Reservoir only?

Mr. MAHER. No, sir. It was for Oahe Reservoir, but had the reservoir been built at a lower level, it would have precluded the irrigation, the reservoir would not have used so much of this land. It would not have been as high and wide.

Senator Burdick. Are you including acreage for the other three main-stem dams?

Mr. MAHER. No, sir.

Senator Burdick. How many acres has been taken for those other three?

Mr. MAHER. I don't know, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE FROM AUDIENCE. 500,000.

Senator Burdick. The total is 500,000.

Senator McGovern. Thank you very much, sir, for your statement.