

crops along the river. Livestock feeding and more intensified crop farming would assure more of these young men a future in this area.

If the present trend continues, very few people will be left on the land. Large corporations will take over and the small towns and cities, as well as the small farms, will be hard pressed to survive.

I believe that irrigation may be the only hope we have in keeping the small farms and small businesses from disappearing in ever increasing numbers.

I ask you to assist us in moving this work forward.

Senator McGovern. Thank you for your statement, Mr. Haskell.

Is Mr. Robert Ewart here? We will put his statement in if he is not here.

Mr. Robert Johnson. Mr. Johnson is speaking on behalf of the Northern Electric Cooperative.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT JOHNSON, GROTON, BROWN COUNTY, S. DAK.

Mr. JOHNSON. My name is Robert A. Johnson, a family farmer, at Groton, Brown County, S. Dak. My farm is 7 miles east of the James River and as of now, I am of out the Oahe Irrigation District. I have the privilege and the pleasure of appearing before your committee as the spokesman for the Northern Electric Cooperative which serves 2,500 member-owners in the northern part of Spink County and all of Brown County.

We directors of Northern Electric have taken the time to study the far-reaching effects of the proposed Oahe Irrigation District, trying to understand how it will mutually affect our cooperative and our owners. Our cooperative, and all of the other rural electric cooperatives east of the Missouri River, are pushing the irrigation development, for we are confident that it will improve and greatly stabilize economy of the entire area. It is also important to us because our members will be using energy during the summer periods when electric usage is at its lowest point of the year.

We directors are obligated to have our electric utilities prepared to provide all the additional power needed by our members for irrigation, air conditioning and other uses. Our Northern Electric president, who will be testifying at this hearing, owns land along the James River and last year carried on a very successful irrigation operation on several acres of corn. This year more of our members are planning irrigation plots and will be using more energy to operate the pumps. Confident that interest in irrigation would grow, our cooperative began heavying up our lines several years ago. Our new office building, which is located in the center of our project, is so constructed and designed as to have adequate rooms for a staff ready to give the necessary help to its owners in planning their individual irrigation projects. Our manager, engineer, and directors have approved a low irrigation rate to make it easier to irrigate with electric-powered pumps.

We are grateful to this U.S. Senate Irrigation Subcommittee for coming to our semiarid region which has renewed hope for a great future with early congressional appropriation approval for the Oahe subdistrict. All of you members of this committee are very familiar with this semiarid land of ours, how strikingly different it is from