

the Board of County Commissioners of Sully County, South Dakota. The district proposed at that date contained approximately 58,000 acres of land situated entirely in Sully County, South Dakota, and retained practically the same system of canals as was proposed in the prior, larger, district that contained approximately 133,988 acres of land. Two other items were also immediately apparent in this proposed district: (a) it had eliminated practically all known objectors with the result that it was excessively gerrymandered and (b) it included practically all non-resident owned land which constituted a goodly percentage of the total acreage for the obvious reason that such land owners could not vote in any election concerning the formation of an irrigation district because of such a restriction in the laws of the State of South Dakota. It is true that the Sully County Commissioners later did go on record that they would drop any land owner from the district that requested it in writing but this did not cure the problem as insufficient notice was given. The proposed district boundaries as finally established contains approximately 69,000 acres of land, part of which was admitted by the Sully County Board of Commissioners without prior certification as to irrigability by the State Engineers Office. The decision of the Sully County Board of Commissioners establishing the proposed district boundaries and that an election be held has been appealed to the Courts. Pending the outcome of such appeal, the election to establish the proposed Missouri Slope Irrigation District is in abeyance.

Many of the landowners whom we represent are now without the proposed district. Why, then, are they still objecting to such a district. Primarily because the present smaller district has the same proposed canals as were proposed in the prior, larger, district that encompassed all of the irrigable land in the area. These canals will have tremendous impact on the people of the area and their present methods of farming. They are, nevertheless, within the confines of the proposed district and the canals will break up their farms and make it exceedingly difficult and costly to move their equipment from place to place. This severance may be somewhat alleviated by condemnation awards, but past experience certainly shows such awards never compensate fully.

These landowners have many objections to the merits of the project and respectfully call the attention of the Committee to the following:

1. That the Bureau of Reclamation is overselling a project and a flood type system of irrigation that is—

(a) Outdated and certainly not adapted for use in South Dakota with its short growing season;

(b) Inefficient and wasteful of both water and the land it will take out of production;

(c) Too expensive;

(d) Going to break up fairly large productive dry land farms being operated on a profitable basis into smaller units of very questionable value to the economy if individually the unit is unprofitable.

2. That the land within the confines of the proposed irrigation is as good as can be found in Sully County, South Dakota and is highly productive. The land is settled and most of it is clear of debt. The 160 acre restriction as to ownership should have no application here—such restriction was an anti-speculation law and should not be a vehicle for land reform of private land holdings.

3. Irrigation farming is a drastic change from dry land farming. These people who are directly involved would like to know more as to the feasibility and cost of such a project before going into it. Once they join in such a program they have no assurance they can get out—they want to have the facts first!!!

4. The western part of this area is only a few miles from the Oahe Reservoir. The most the area requires is supplemental irrigation. Water could be piped underground from the reservoir with provision to supply necessary pressure where sprinkler systems were to be used. Water consumption and maintenance would be less and such system would be of much greater value to the land owner.

5. They seriously question that 160 acres of irrigated land in Sully County, even free and clear of encumbrance, can support a family. Attention is called to Bulletin 450, May 1955, "50 Years Experience on the Belle Fourche Irrigation Project" by South Dakota State College, Brookings, South Dakota.

6. That they realize the need for water in South Dakota and are certainly not against irrigation. All have done what they can to develop available natural resources and wish to continue doing so—but they want a system that will have a reasonable assurance of making a profit and will not break up their farms.