

And we think we can salvage from the troublesome part of the third division that which is the best and strengthen that which is already working.

And, so, it is on that basis, that I would make this rather short and impromptu statement this morning, Mr. Chairman, and make as a part of the record that portion which is much better phrased and much more articulate in its substance so far as the project is concerned.

We have coming up here men who know the technical details of the background, in depth, of this, and rather than betray my ignorance in technology, I would hope that they would cover it up for me in what they will have to say.

Senator ANDERSON. In the committee's report of February 26, 1964, Senator Simpson stated:

The negotiations on a long-term contract broke down in May of 1961 when the Board of Commissioners of the Third Division Irrigation District asserted that the lands had no repayment ability and that further negotiations would be futile. Subsequently, the Board's position has been that the settlers are unable to pay even operation and maintenance cost and that the Third Division should be abandoned.

How do you reconcile that?

Senator McGEE. I reconcile that by suggesting that that was a statement made at a time when we did not know all of the things that we know now. Some though they did. I did not happen to agree with that statement. We tried every way that we knew how to prevent going in the direction they finally went in 1963 and 1964, buying back the third division, because there was too much good land there, too much good farming land there, to forfeit it all on those terms.

We did not recommend at anytime—and by “we” I mean those for whom I speak or seek to represent in this situation. We did not recommend that as the solution, but this was the one that was ultimately agreed upon and anybody would have been a fool not to sell his land back under those terms. I did not happen to condone or to approve that approach. That was not the way to get at this question. So, I make no apologies for it, and I make no defense of it. That is water over the dam.

I think that we have our best opportunity here to reestablish the capital structure and the return from it, which has proved to be a more meaningful part, rather than a small controversy on the total project.

Senator ANDERSON. My concern is with this question as it relates to some others we have had. In 1930 we had the Dust Bowl situation. I was a part of the administration at that time. There were some 400,000 acres. We placed all of those in the Dust Bowl area, and some of it was very fine land. Some people did not know how to operate the land, and those who were in charge of the projects came back and said that they knew how to do it now. And this was done over and over again, and it was suggested that we get the Governors from other irrigation districts to help on the question. What was wrong with that?

Nothing but an expense all the way through. Why should not we abandon it?

Senator McGEE. I tried for not abandoning it. There is a salvagable portion there that does produce and makes a base for good farming. We are desperately in need of productive small farms, with the opportunity which enriches the Riverton project itself, and the moment