

unproductive would be nonreimbursable in compliance with reclamation law. The excess land limitation provisions would be modified to permit delivery of water to 160 acres of class 1 land or the equivalent in other land classes, as determined by the Secretary.

The proposed legislation would give priority in the purchase of presently owned Government land to resident landowners on the Riverton unit who have not sold their lands to the United States under provision of Public Law 88-278. Thus, irrigable lands with basic water rights and project facilities would be returned to the tax rolls and be utilized, not generally as independent farm units, but as supplements to the farms in the Midvale Irrigation District. The first and second divisions would become a part of the Missouri River Basin project. The present practice of year-to-year piecemeal leasing does not encourage the lessees to improve the lands or to properly operate and maintain the facilities.

You will recall that we have been striving for a number of years to achieve a permanent solution to the long-standing problems of the Riverton project, particularly its third division. In May of 1961, the Board of Commissioners of the Third Division Irrigation District asserted that the lands of the district had no repayment ability.

Thereupon, I, as the Commissioner of Reclamation, appointed two independent boards of consultants, one to study the repayment capabilities of the third division, and the other to review the drainage problems and land classification of the third division. Both boards of consultants reported that upon completion of canal lining and drains, the third division lands could support a sustained irrigation agriculture producing sufficient income to pay farm operating costs, family living expenses, and water charges, including a construction component.

Pursuant to a request of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, the Secretary of the Interior appointed, in August 1962, a review commission to make a special study of all Reclamation projects in the State of Wyoming. The Wyoming Reclamation Projects Survey Team gave its first consideration to the Riverton project.

A copy of the team's detailed report on that project was furnished to you on February 20, 1963. Some of the recommendations of the survey team have been carried out within the present scope of authority of the Department of the Interior. Legislative authority to put into effect the other recommendations of the team, as well as recommendations of the two previously appointed Boards of Consultants, is included in S. 670.

The proposed legislation, based mainly upon recommendations of the survey team, would enable us to proceed with the solution to the problems of the Riverton project.

Because of problems encountered by the landowners in the third division, the Congress, by the Act of March 10, 1964, Public Law 88-278 (78 Stat. 156), authorized the United States to acquire lands of that division. The United States presently owns all but a small portion—approximately 80 acres—of the 11,831 irrigable acres in the third division.

I want to hasten, right there, to point out that of the 11,831 acres, 8,913 acres are usable right now. The canal lining on the drains are in-