

On the other hand, the leasing program has some bad effects that should not be overlooked. The lands have been withdrawn from the county tax rolls. County government and school districts have suffered. Buildings have been unoccupied, vandalized, deteriorated, unimproved, and subjected to unusual wear and tear. The land has suffered because temporary permittees will not properly fertilize or preserve land for sustained use. Proper farming methods of crop rotation cannot be practiced. Weed control is minimal. The application and waste of water tends to be excessive on temporary leased lands.

In short, the permittees naturally do not treat these lands in the manner they treat their own deeded lands.

As a result, the real loser is the Government. Its total investment represented in the construction cost of the irrigation system and in the appropriations required to underwrite the buy-out program is being placed in ever-increasing jeopardy. The value of the land and improvements is decreasing at an alarming rate. The longer the Government waits to sell these lands, the greater the loss will be. These lands and improvements should be sold by the Government while they still have value.

The legislation now being considered seeks to authorize the return of these third division lands to private ownership. We can assure you that the Midvale farmers stand ready today to purchase these lands at a fair price.

I would like to enter into the record at this time a total of 17 letters addressed to the Midvale Irrigation District by Midvale farmers who have expressed a desire for purchasing these third division units if and when they are offered for sale by the Government.

I would like, if I may, Mr. Chairman, to read one or two of the letters I have here. I think it would be of interest.

(The material follows:)

RIVERTON, WYO., November 27, 1967.

MIDVALE IRRIGATION DISTRICT,
Commissioners and Manager:

This is a letter of intent, at which time legislation and other obstacles are settled as to the disposition of Third Division land.

I am vitally interested in purchasing a unit at a fair price, which would be large enough to be economically feasible in the face of the present trend of mechanization in agriculture.

We have farmed Third Division land in North Portal for the past five years. We are satisfied that it is good land and will produce with land on Midvale, taking into consideration, that it has not been out of sagebrush very many years.

Last year we leased Units 70-74-75-77 and intend to renew our leases for another year.

We have had a sound operation on this land and believe that the Midvale commissioners and local Bureau of Reclamation officials are aware of this fact.

I feel that to abandon Third Division land would be a gross injury to the people of Midvale, and the state of Wyoming and the United States. The investment, will be redeemed by the land if given a chance.

Third Division land has for the past five years given me and my family, the opportunity to get enough land leased to make a profitable operation, this would not have been possible if we had been limited to Midvale land.

This land returned to private ownership will produce much better, than it has under the short term lease.

We would welcome the opportunity to acquire land in Third Division.

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT J. RUMERY.