

The Cottonwood Bench lessees are all Midvale farmers who support the legislation before this committee because this legislation would authorize the Bureau to sell these lands and it would enlarge the present acreage limitations. The land-equivalent formula in this legislation would put us in a position to purchase these Cottonwood Bench lands and still retain our Midvale farms.

The Cottonwood Bench lessees want the opportunity to purchase these lands. We know they are capable of sustained irrigation farming. My brother and I have raised potato crops on our lease that have run over 200 sacks to the acre over a 3-year period. Our lease produces good crops of hay, corn silage, and grain, providing forage for winter feeding of our livestock. Other crops grown on these leases are alfalfa seed, beans, and other small grains. Our land on Cottonwood Bench has been very valuable to us as a supplement to our overall operation and I am sure the other lessees consider these lands a profitable part of their farming units.

The lessees, over 12 years, have made many improvements on their Cottonwood Bench leases—such as many miles of fencing, leveling, installation of culverts and cattle guards, water wells, and corrals. Considerable money has been spent in fertilizer and noxious weed control. The lessees have also paid annual charges to the Bureau of Reclamation for operation and maintenance for water delivered to these lands. The schedule I introduced earlier shows that \$11,184 was paid for operation and maintenance in 1967 which is a typical annual payment paid by the permittees for the past 12 years.

These improvements and expenditures have been made over and above the rental payments because the lessees have satisfied themselves that these lands are productive and economically feasible for agricultural purposes.

As I stated earlier, the drainage work on Cottonwood Bench was not completed by the Bureau of Reclamation. The association recognizes that some drainage work will have to be done. At the present time about 550 acres are in need of drainage. We have made an independent inquiry into this drainage problem and have determined that it could be corrected. Mr. Robert E. Heward, work unit conservationist for the Riverton office of the Soil Conservation Service, has confirmed this finding in a letter to the association dated November 21, 1967.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce this letter into the record at this time.

Senator HANSEN. Without objection, it may be received.

Mr. DAVISON. We have investigated the possibility of constructing an open drain to serve this area and we believe that such a drain would cost approximately \$40,000. The association further believes that if the lands were put in private ownership the landowners could construct such a drain in cooperation with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. This agency could share in the construction of such a drain up to one-half of the cost thereof. We have investigated the possibility of this assistance and have received a letter from Ivan J. Sackman, office manager, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, dated October 9, 1967, which generally endorses