

occurred beyond the control of man's know-how and ability to act soon enough—or to cope with, successfully, within the means available.

In considering the Riverton project as a whole, it is important to remember that the project is represented by two separate legal entities of government. One is the Third Division Irrigation District, representing approximately 11,800 acres which was settled after World War II. The other is the Midvale Irrigation District, which represents over 45,000 acres and was settled and developed beginning in the 1920's. The Midvale district constitutes the initially planned first and second divisions of the Riverton project.

As the third division completed its 10-year initial development period, financial circumstances within the Third Division Irrigation District were not favorable by which a repayment contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, as prescribed by reclamation law, could be successfully negotiated. During the course of the development period, seepage and adverse soil conditions were such that reduced irrigable acreages rendered many of the farm units to uneconomical sizes. Even though farm size units were readjusted, efforts by settlers to take remedial action were severely limited by financial restrictions. On the premise that additional time was needed to reach a repayment agreement, Congress permitted continued water deliveries to those users desiring the water.

For the past 2 or 3 years, the financial plight of some of the third division settlers has created a stigma over the whole project. Headlines of news reporting has further focused attention, with well publicized allegations and accusations, to the dramatic and sensational aspects of the problems of the third division.

After a number of hearings before the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the Congress, it became apparent that previous investigations made by the Department of Interior, along with a breakdown in negotiations for agreement on a repayment contract, did not offer any reasonable and plausible solutions.

In order to further get to the basis of these problems and to recommend to the Congress a positive approach for a reasonable solution, the Department of Interior appointed a five-man review commission, which is referred to as the Wyoming reclamation projects survey team.

This effort to make a thorough study of these problems was implemented from a suggestion by the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. The natural resource board is apprised that such a study and the recommendations contained therein does not imply any mandatory obligation for the final action to be made by the committee.

By the same token, the House committee is to be commended for its suggestion. The natural resource board recognizes that the team's approach to this most complex and controversial situation was an extremely difficult task. The findings and recommendations of their report certainly demonstrates the thoroughness of the investigation. The team members, who were selected with an excellent cross section of individual interests, pursued their investigations within the scope and instructions with which they were charged. Their conclusions were made as the team, representing themselves. The report is clear in this respect and can well stand on its own, leaving to others the right to form any opinions.

As evidenced by the information and data obtained, the basic objectives indicated that there were other problems, equally, if not more important, than portrayed in the headlines as related to the third division.

The physical relationship and geography of the two irrigation districts along with other similarities has formed the basis of the objectives on which the Riverton project, as a whole, and the district's problems, and has become of primary importance.

The Midvale district (constituting the first and second divisions) is the older, having contracted with the Bureau in 1931 for its repayment obligations. Settlement problems, generally inherent on this type of development, were also evidenced, as similar seepage problems appeared during its development; whereas, certain land adjustments were subsequently made to retain economical farm units.

Realizing that remedial measures were necessary to prevent further seepage encroachments on productive lands, several million dollars were expended by the district for rehabilitation works. At the present time, approximately 377 units are under Midvale district as compared to the 57 units under the third division, some of which have not been irrigated or formed in the last few years.