

At this point, it might be well to review the extent of the technical agreement on the value of these lands:

A. In 1961, a board of three prominent drainage consultants headed by Dr. James Luthin of California University made a study of drainage on third division lands. Essentially, their report recognized that the heavier textured, lower lands presented some difficult problems in drainage and reclamation; that the lighter textured soils on the terraces and uplands were suitable for sustained irrigated agricultural production; and that drains on these soils were functioning properly.

B. Also, in 1961 a board of three economic consultants headed by Mr. John Goe, an economic consultant of Denver Colo., reviewed the repayment problems on the third division. They made a number of recommendations that were applicable at that time. They recognized economic problems needing adjustment but did not consider abandonment of the resource as a solution.

C. In 1962-63 a five-man team was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to study reclamation projects including the Riverton project. This group represented an excellent cross section of experience and included: Mr. Earl Bower, a prominent Wyoming farmer, banker, and longtime director in the National Reclamation Association; Mr. Milt Coffman, a prominent Wyoming businessman, banker, livestock operator, and a member of the Wyoming Natural Resource Board; Mr. Ival Goslin, executive director of the Upper Colorado River Commission; Dr. Howard Haise, an eminent soil scientist and irrigation engineer with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Serving as chairman of this group, I represented the interest of the university.

Because of extreme difficulty that had been encountered in resolving this problem, at least to the satisfaction of a group of third division settlers, the survey team went to great lengths to evaluate all facets of the problem within the specialties represented on this team. Studies of existing drains, salt accumulations, cropping, irrigation, and financial problems were made and related to the whole community.

The conclusions from this study, with all the advantages of hindsight, pointed up some errors that had been made by just about everyone concerned with this project.

The main points, many of which apply today, are summarized on pages 1 to 9, volume I of the survey team report. This summary contains the unequivocal recommendation that this resource is far too valuable to consider total abandonment of the irrigable lands.

The essential features of the recommendations in the survey team report are contained in S. 670.

D. Then there is the acid test for technical judgments, and that is the success of experienced operators. Ample evidence indicates technical judgments are sound as they relate to the lands involved today.

Thus, the University of Wyoming scientists share the views of a large group of qualified judges who believe these lands are good when farmed under some experienced management. I might add that these soil specialists recognize little or no significant difference in the soils found on third division and those in the Midvale District. I should emphasize that these views apply to the present classification of soils on third division that now have the benefit of certain drainage protection.