

Since the impounding of the Missouri River waters behind the Garrison Dam, we have found it necessary to supplement our moisture through gravity irrigation. We now irrigate 250 acres of sugar beets, corn and alfalfa.

The increased production due to irrigation makes beef and grain production more desirable.

The sharp raising and lowering of the river by the engineers is causing serious bank erosion. We have lost close to a quarter section of land since the impounding of waters. Also the loss of permanent irrigation pump sites at critical periods during the growing season means a serious loss in production.

There are 26 river miles in Oliver County. In this, there are 13 serious bank erosion areas at the present time. Oliver County has had one serious erosion area stabilized. The state and county are responsible for \$36,000, cost of maintenance on this project in less than one year.

Our county has an assessed valuation of under \$4,000,000. The Water Management Board can ask for a 3 mill levy. We have spent 1.6 mills for ground water surveys and other expenses. We owe \$18,000 to the State of North Dakota for our share of this bank maintenance. It will take us several years to raise this amount of money. Under the present law, state and counties are responsible for all maintenance. It seems that the taxpayers of these areas are being grossly and unjustly burdened.

If the Corp of Engineers can justify the building of the Garrison Dam and the Garrison Diversion District, it seems to us in Oliver County that the Corps should be responsible for the maintaining of a stable river bank situation because at the present time we are being unjustly taxed plus losing valuable, taxable land to river erosion. If the Corps cannot justify maintenance then at least this maintenance expense should be spread over the entire area being benefited by the building of the Garrison and all other dams.

There are approximately 65 miles of natural river flow or banks left of the Missouri River. Besides the farming area this includes two (2) power plants, small towns and Mandan and Bismarck. The total value of this area is beyond comprehension.

STATEMENT BY ERVIN BOURGOIS, FARMER, RANCHER, IRRIGATOR, ON BANK EROSION
ALONG THE MISSOURI RIVER, JUNE 20, 1968

My name is Ervin Bourgois. I live on a farm and ranch that my father homesteaded in 1883. My farm is located nine miles northwest of Bismarck, North Dakota, along this Missouri River. My son and I operate a cattle raising and feeding operation. When the Garrison Dam was completed, we put the land we own along the Missouri River into irrigation. This has permitted us to expand our operations to include the raising of potatoes and sugar beets. Eight-hundred acres are now under gravity irrigation. Our yields on this irrigated land prove equal or better than any other area in the Montana-Dakota region.

Now, since the completion of the Garrison Dam, we are running into problems of excessive washing away of the banks along the Missouri. We are in the continual process of changing the pumping sites due to the instability of the river banks. Let me tell you what this means to the irrigators in dollars and cents. There is the cost of moving electric lines and the cost of developing new pump sites. Many manhours go into each pumping site. This drain on our manhours comes at our busiest season when we can least afford it. Then there is the cost of the land that is permanently being lost to us and for which there can be no replacement.

This loss of land that I just brought to your attention will become even more critical for our coming generations if steps are not taken immediately to stop this washing away process. So far it is the irrigator that has withstood this cost. It must, therefore, be asked why the farmers between the Oahe and Garrison Dams should suffer these great losses resulting through no fault of their own and over which they have no control, leaving them no recourse other than to tell you on this committee of this plight. Another aspect of the high cost of this bank erosion will be felt as the reservoir of the Oahe Dam becomes filled in with silt cutting into its storage capacity. Wouldn't you agree, it would be better to keep all of this real estate just where it is?

The Army Corps of Engineers has recommended that irrigators put down wells instead of pumping out of the river. This is a short-term solution for the banks will still be eroding away and this rich farm land will still be lost forever.