

Ben Yollen, M.D.  
128 South 8th St.  
Brawley, Calif.

February 7, 1963

The Hon. Frank Barry, Esq.  
The Solicitor  
U.S. Dept. of Interior  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT 1,703 PERSONS SIGNED THE PETITION  
REQUESTING THAT THE 160-ACRES LIMITATION PER PERSON BE ENFORCED IN  
IMPERIAL COUNTY OF CALIFORNIA.

To get this large number of persons to vote for enforcement of the U.S. Reclamation Law was a tremendous achievement which you will realize after I describe the methods USED BY THE BIG FARM INTERESTS AND ABSENTEE LANDOWNERS TO FOOL THE POPULACE.

To give you a birdseye view of the situation, I give you the following background:

Imperial County is 5th in rank as to the yearly value of its agricultural products considering all the counties of the U.S. This is all due to the control of the Colorado River by Federal Reclamation Projects. The total acreage involved is about 500,000 acres with a TOTAL VALUE OF ABOUT \$500 MILLIONS. You can therefore see that the big farm interests and the absentee landowners are not going to give up this prize without a bitter struggle. They own 90% of the land.

If the 160-acres limitation were enforced, a husband and wife would be able to farm 320 acres. Since the growing season here is continuous for 12 months, you can see that the production would be more here for a husband and wife combination than in the Midwest. Here  $2\frac{1}{2}$  crops are grown to the Midwest's 1 because of the 12 month growing season. Therefore, because of this factor alone, a husband & wife here have the equivalent of a 800 acres farm as compared to the Midwest 320.

Because of the better control of the water supply to the crops and because of the less variable weather here, the ground is more productive than in the Midwest or in the Southeast. For example where the Southeast gets a bale of cotton per acre, here  $2\frac{1}{2}$  bales per acre is the rule. When this factor of productivity is considered, the 320 acres becomes 800 acres. Therefore, a husband & wife here with an actual land acreage of 320 acres when the time factor of a growing season of 12 months and the productivity of the ground are taken into consideration, HAVE A FARM THE EQUIVALENT OF 1,600 ACRES IN THE MIDWEST OR SOUTH.

A person farming 160 acres here by the same reasoning, would have the equivalent of a 800 acres farm of the Midwest or South.

By any standard, you can see that with the enforcement of the 160-acres limitation of the U.S. Reclamation Law, that a single person or a family would be able to make a living IF THEY WERE NOT SQUEEZED OUT BY BIG CORPORATION FARMS.

The recent U.S. Agricultural Census of 1959 shows that 1,600 small farms have been forced out of business by the big corporation farms. IF THE 160-ACRES LIMITATION IS NOT SOON ENFORCED, THE REMAINING 200-300 SMALL FARMERS WILL ALL BE SQUEEZED OUT. They have 10% of the farmland.

You and about 1,000 others in Washington, D.C. like Senators, Representatives and other officials received my Newsletters entitled, HOW THE SMALL FARMERS WERE BETRAYED and SAVE THE LITTLE FARMERS BY VOTING FOR BEN YELLEN. President Kennedy and his staff have the leaflets.

These home made leaflets were distributed by me personally, person to person, in Imperial County. NOBODY WOULD HELP ME IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF THESE LEAFLETS BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID!!! This was



THE ONLY WAY THAT THE VOTERS OF IMPERIAL COUNTY COULD BE INFORMED THAT I WAS PURPOSELY RUNNING FOR ASSESSOR-COLLECTOR OF THE IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT AS A STRATEGEM TO GIVE THE PEOPLE A CHANCE TO GIVE THEIR OPINION AS TO WHETHER THEY WANTED THE 160-ACRES LIMITATION PER PERSON ENFORCED.

THE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS WOULD NOT PRINT MY PLATFORM. THE SAN DIEGO UNION WHICH HAS AN IMPERIAL VALLEY SECTION, ALSO DID NOT PRINT IT.

A complete CURTAIN OF SILENCE was set up by the newspapers to prevent the voters from learning that a vote for Yellen meant a vote for the enforcement of the 160-acres limitation of the U.S. Reclamation Law.

The platforms of ALL THE OTHER CANDIDATES WERE PRINTED IN THE NEWSPAPERS. The incumbent Assessor-Collector of course made no mention of the 160-acres limitation issue in his platform.

There are 4 radio stations and one television station here. NONE OF THEM MADE ANY NEWSCAST ABOUT THE PLATFORM THAT I WAS RUNNING ON.

There was a complete NEWS BLACKOUT just as is seen in countries under a DICTATORSHIP. Only my Newsletters told about the 160-acres limitation.

I do not belong to any organization like the Masons, Knights of Columbus, Elks, or service clubs like Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, etc. etc. Yet despite the fact that the towns are decaying because the little farmers are being squeezed out and THEREFORE CAN NOT BUY IN THE TOWNS, NOT ONE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS INVITED ME TO SPEAK BEFORE THEM. Yet the serious economic depression of the towns is the PARAMOUNT SITUATION here. FEAR OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE BIG FARMERS AND ABSENTEE LAND-OWNERS IS JUST AS GREAT HERE AS IN THE LATIN-AMERICAN COUNTRIES where the "Alliance for Progress" is trying to get some farmland into the hands of the little people. THE LITTLE PEOPLE HERE ALSO WANT SOME FARMLAND.

But the climax of the activities by the big landowners to fool the people came on election day. Enclosed are the Brawley News and the El Centro IMPERIAL VALLEY PRESS. They are the only newspapers printed daily in Imperial Valley. Murray Norris who is the publicity man for the BIG REPUBLICANS WHO ARE THE BIG LANDOWNERS AND BIG FARMERS, had this headline printed across the top of the front page of both papers in 1 inch letters. It came out on Election Day, Feb. 5, 1963. Here it is:  
BRAWLEY CITY COUNCIL CENSURES  
DR. BEN YELLEN FOR "UNTRUTHS"

Further down in smaller letters (although they still are larger than print), is: COUNCIL MEMBERS CHARGE YELLEN CONTINUES TO FLAUNT THE LAW.

Most newspaper readers only have time to read headlines so that you can imagine the effect on the voters. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT NOTHING WAS PUT INTO THE ARTICLE FOLLOWING THE HEADLINES ABOUT THE 160-ACRES SITUATION.

This SMEAR CAMPAIGN was also taken up by the 4 radio stations and the television station so that in their so-called newscasts which came out at least every hour, the listener would hear this refrain, "DR. YELLEN TELLS LIES, HE VIOLATES LAWS". But the smear campaign could not fool the people to whom I had distributed my Newsletters under such great difficulty and in limited quantity as compared to the Smear Campaign conducted by the big landowners and big farmers.

The voters, 1,703 of them, signed the petition for enforcement of the 160-acres limitation. My opponent, the incumbent, who of course is a trained assessor and licensed appraiser, got 4,541 votes on his platform that he is trained for his job.

There is no question in my mind that if the NEWS BLACKOUT and SMEAR CAMPAIGN had not been pulled, THAT MANY MORE VOTERS WOULD HAVE SIGNED FOR THE 160-ACRES LIMITATION. The little people have spoken despite the DICTATORSHIP here. PLEASE ENFORCE THE U.S. RECLAMATION LAW.

Yours truly, *Ben Yellen*  
Ben Yellen, M.D.