

NEWS LETTER FROM DR. BEN YELLEN

Brawley, Calif.

Oct. 3, 1960

To the Employees of: Imperial County  
Imperial Irrigation District  
Cities of Imperial County

All you employees have fixed salaries. The big farmers and big landowners who control the County of Imperial, the Imperial Irrigation District and the Cities of Imperial County, are the ones who really decide what your salaries will be. These big farmowners and landowners own or control 90% of the farmland and if they paid the proper taxes, there would be enough money to give you a raise in salary.

Practically all you employees live in the cities. Some of you also are little farmers. It is therefore important to you how much taxes you pay and how big your electrical bill is. It is important to you that the big landowners who own 90% of the farmland pay the proper taxes, otherwise you have to pay higher taxes to make up for them.

Your electric bill is twice as high as it should be. This has come about by the Imperial Irrigation District (controlled by the big landowners and big farmers) making a contract with the U.S. to buy the \$25,000,000 All American Canal and paying for it out of the electricity receipts. Now absentee landowners own 70% of the farmland and local wealthy farmers own 20%. The absentee landowners do not live here and do not use electricity here and therefore do not pay one cent for the All American Canal. The local wealthy people do not use electricity in proportion to the amount of their landholdings and therefore only pay small amounts for the Canal. The ones who pay for the Canal are the inhabitants of the cities and the little farmers who use practically all the electricity.

As of 1959, the cities of Imperial Valley used water amounting to \$30,000. The big farmers and landowners used \$2,000,000 of water. So you can see that the Canal brings water chiefly for the farmlands. Prior to the building of the Canal in 1939-1941, the cities got enough water because they use very little water. In times of drought, it was the farmlands that did not have water. The Canal was built for the farmlands. But the absentee landowners who own 70% of the land do not pay one cent for the Canal. You and the other city inhabitants have had the burden of paying for this Canal shifted on to your shoulders by the big landowners. You have to pay big electricity bills to pay for the Canal which does not give you any special benefit.

When it comes to real estate property taxes paid to the County and the Imperial Irrigation District, you are again exploited. Farmland is given such low assessed valuations, that the inhabitants of cities pay 4 times more property taxes than the big farmers and landowners pay for farmland of equivalent value.

All these methods of shifting the burden of taxes, does not just happen. The absentee landowners and local wealthy farmers are united so that they do not pay high taxes. Your shoulders are burdened.

I have already discussed with lawyers in Washington, D.C. about the renegotiation of the contract with the U.S. so that the Canal is paid for by the water receipts. In this way the absentee landowners will pay for 70% of the Canal and the local wealthy farmers will pay 20%. Follow my advice as to which candidates to vote for and your tax burdens will fall.