

May 5, 1969

# CORRUPT INTERIOR DEPT. PROVIDES LOOPHOLE FOR BIG RANCHERS TO EVADE LAW

On May 1, 1969, I and 122 other persons filed a lawsuit against Walter J. Hickel, Secretary of the Department of Interior, Floyd E. Dominy, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, and A.B. West, Regional Director of the Bureau of Reclamation.

This lawsuit is Civil #69-124-S and was filed in the U.S. District Court in San Diego, Calif. The reason that this lawsuit is explained to you is that the San Diego Union and SCHURZ'S PROSTITUTED PRESS, and the Riverside (Calif.) Enterprise which are distributed in Imperial and Riverside Counties are in collusion with the big farm interests and will not print news of this lawsuit or if they do, will give a distorted version so that you will be brainwashed.

The power of the big ranchers is such that not only do they control the local newspapers but they have been able to prevent the enforcement of the U.S. Reclamation Law because the U.S. Dept. of Interior is corrupt. In the 1920's, Secretary of Interior Albert Fall was convicted of taking a \$100,000.00 bribe in the Teapot Dome oil scandal. The Interior Dept. has a long history of corruption and although it is impossible to prove the taking of bribes in most instances, it is quite easy to show the corruption by showing the failure of high officials of this Department to do their duty even after their non-feasance is pointed out to them.

Lawsuit Civil #69-124-S is a legal action to get a Writ of Mandamus to compel the high officials of the Interior Dept. to enforce the residency provision of the U.S. Reclamation Law in the Imperial Irrigation District located in Imperial County, in the Coachella Valley County Water District located in Riverside County, and in the Palo Verde Irrigation District located in both Riverside and Imperial Counties.

Since this Newsletter is being distributed all over the United States and particularly to the press and officials located in Washington, D.C., some background will be given for better understanding.

The U.S. Reclamation Law of 1902 in essence is a law which states that the money of the taxpayers of all the United States would be taken and dams built on rivers to impound the water and canals would be built to bring the water to desert and semi-desert land in the Western United States so that people could farm this land

- which could not be farmed before because there was insufficient rain.

The intent of the law was that as many people as possible should be able to get into farming by being able to get the water for irrigation farming. President Theodore Roosevelt expressed this thought most concisely when he signed this law by saying, "the money is being spent to build up the little man of the West so that no big man from the East or West can monopolize the water and the land".

The primary purpose of building the Boulder Dam on the Colorado River was to have water for farming in the Imperial Irrigation District, the Coachella Valley District and the Palo Verde Irrigation District which use 3.5 million acres feet of the 4.4 million acres feet assigned to California. The creation of electricity at the Boulder Dam was just a byproduct-a secondary reason.

The U.S. Reclamation Law has two important provisions. 1. The person getting the water for farming must live on the land or close by. This provision was to prevent absentee landowners from farming. 2. Each person can get sufficient water so that he can farm 160 acres. Husband and wife can farm 320 acres. It must be realized that in the desert where there is constant sunshine and irrigation water available, that growing of crops goes on each month of the year. One acre in the desert area is equal to the production of five acres in the Midwest or Deep South. A family farm of 320 acres equals a farm of 1,600 acres in the Midwest or Deep South.

The years went by and the Interior Dept. in collusion with the big ranchers DID NOT ENFORCE THESE TWO IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE U.S. RECLAMATION LAW in the Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley District and the Palo Verde Irrigation District. The newspapers in these areas being controlled by the big ranchers, never revealed to the people how they were being swindled out of their right to do the farming. In the Imperial Irrigation District, 70% of the land is owned by absentee landowners and the same is true in the other Districts.

In addition, these big ranchers have imposed several rackets on the population. There is insufficient space to give these in detail. Roughly, the absentee landowners escape 66% of their property taxes. The local populace has to pay 3 times the correct price for electricity so that the big ranchers are able to get the irrigation water for 1/4 the correct price.

I became cognizant of what was going on and after publicizing the situation for 6 years by means of these Newsletters (the newspapers would not print anything), The Interior Dept. finally in the spring of 1967, filed a lawsuit in the Federal Court at San Diego against the Imperial Irrigation District to enforce the 160 acres limitation per person.

BUT IT DID NOT ATTEMPT TO ENFORCE THE PROVISION CONCERNING THE RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT. Enforcement of the residency requirement will solve 85% of the problem here. The 160 acres limitation is only a small factor in this problem. So I and 122 persons filed an amicus curiae action in this lawsuit hoping it would prod the Interior Dept. to amend its lawsuit to also take up the residency provision.

But the corrupt Interior Dept. would not amend its lawsuit. In this way, after 10 to 15 years later, when the U.S. Supreme Court rules for enforcing the 160 acres limitation, the big absentee ranch corporations will still be able to farm. The Irvine Co., the Purex Corp., the CBK Industries, and the United Fruit Co. (grows bananas on 200,000 acres in Central America) have total assets of \$2 1/2 billions and are now farming here. The only thing they have to do is to create some 50,000 small corporations each farming 160 acres and in this way will do all the farming in these areas.

These big farm corporations are successful because they have grabbed the cotton and beet allotments and the little farmers can not get them. They and the other absentee farmowners must be driven out. To wait 10 to 15 years for the 160 acres limitation to be decided and then to have another lawsuit for 10 to 15 years on the residency requirement is the loophole. Lawsuit Civil #69-124-S is intended to stop the collusion of the Interior Dept. and big ranchers SO THAT NO LOOPHOLE FOR EVASION WILL BE POSSIBLE.