

NEWS LETTER FROM DR. BEN YELLEN

Brawley, Calif.

Oct. 2, 1960

HOW THE LITTLE FARMERS OF IMPERIAL VALLEY CAN HELP THEMSELVES

I have lived in Imperial Valley for 20 years. I find that many little farmers are being squeezed out by the individual big farmers and corporation farmers who now own or control 90% of the farmland.

The little farmers are fooled by the propaganda of the big outfits. The little farmers belong to the farm organizations in Imperial Valley. But these organizations are controlled by the big outfits so that there is no help to the little farmers.

The powerful farmers always talk about the labor unions of farmworkers being bad for the farmers. Well, there are no farmworkers' unions in Imperial Valley, so this is not the reason for the little farmers not being able to exist. The big farmers have imported Mexican farmworkers. Little farmers who work their own farms have to compete against these low wage workers and do not have a chance. Little farmers would be better off if the big outfits had to hire American workers.

Because they are large, the big farmers can run their land at lower production costs. They are able to get cotton and beet allotments while the little farmers can not get them. The only way the little farmers can successfully compete with the large ones is to get the large ones pay their correct taxes and to cut them down to size.

The big weapon of the little farmers is their votes. The retail merchants, the small businessmen, the city inhabitants and the American farmworkers are also being squeezed by the big farmowners and their allies the absentee landowners who have 70% of the farmland and rent it to the big farm corporations. If all these exploited groups unite, they can elect candidates who will do their bidding.

The first thing to be done with control in the hands of the little people is to have the Imperial Irrigation District enforce the U.S. Reclamation Law. A single person will get irrigation water for 160 acres. A husband and wife will get water for 320 acres. When the big ranches can not get water above these amounts, they will be cut down to size and the little farmers will have equal sized competitors.

Then the Assessors of the County of Imperial and the Imperial Irrigation District will be forced to raise the assessed valuation of these big landowners so that they pay correct taxes.

Then a petition to Congress will be sent to stop U.S. Public Law 78 which brings in the imported Mexican farmworkers which give such a big advantage to the big farmers.

Then the contract between the Imperial Irrigation District and the U.S. will be renegotiated so that the \$25,000,000 All American Canal will be paid for out of water receipts and not out of electricity receipts. This will make the absentee landowners who own 70% of the farmland pay for the All American Canal. Heretofore, since the absentee landowners did not live here, they did not use electricity and escaped paying their share for the All American Canal.

Little farmers!!! You have not got a chance when you side with the big farmers! When you vote, no one knows how you vote.