

January 27, 1966

\$6 MILLIONS SWINDLE OF PEOPLE LIVING IN COACHELLA VALLEY

You residents who live in the areas of Indio, Palm Springs, Palm Desert, Coachella, Thermal, and the intervening regions are being swindled out of \$6 millions yearly. First there is a farmland tax evasion racket that amounts to about \$2 millions and then there is the \$4 millions in electricity bill overcharges to you each year.

Now you may wonder why the writer who lives in Imperial Valley just to the South of you, is bringing these swindles to your attention. In Imperial Valley there is a farmland tax evasion swindle amounting to \$8 millions yearly and also a \$14 millions electricity swindle yearly for a grand total of \$22 millions.

THE SAME GROUP IS EXPLOITING THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN COACHELLA VALLEY THAT IS DOING THE SAME TO THE RESIDENTS OF IMPERIAL VALLEY.

By the combined action of the inhabitants of both Valleys, it is possible to stop these rackets being perpetrated on you homeowners, merchants, businessmen, and working people. It makes no difference what line of work you are in or if you are retired, if you live in Coachella Valley, you are being exploited by these rackets.

The farmland tax racket works as follows: if you will look at your tax bill, you will find that that your home or place of business is assessed at between 25% to 35% of its market value. But if you look up the assessment of any piece of farmland (just take a farmland parcel which was recently sold), you will find that it is assessed at only 6% to 12%. This means that for property of equal value, you the homeowner, merchant, and businessman, are paying 3 times more in taxes than the farmland owners.

WHO ARE THE FARMLAND OWNERS? They are the members of the COACHELLA VALLEY FARMERS ASSOCIATION which has offices in Indio and Thermal. The manager of this association is LELAND YOST who in the past has issued many propoganda statements to the local newspapers. BUT LELAND YOST HAS NEVER TOLD YOU ABOUT THE \$2 MILLIONS FARMLAND TAX SWINDLE FROM WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE COACHELLA VALLEY FARMERS ASSOCIATION BENEFIT. Neither has he told you about the \$4 millions ingenious swindle in electricity by which you pay high electricity bills so that the farmland owners can get BELOW COST irrigation water.

In Imperial Valley, 70% of the farmland is owned by absentee landlords. A similar situation exists in Coachella Valley so do not have the idea that you are giving some small farmer who lives locally a break on his taxes. For example, HEGGBLADE & MARGULEAS CO. located on Ave 56 & Highway 111, Thermal is absentee owned. Many other farms and ranches just have managers who work for wages or have a small financial interest in the ranch.

But one thing you can be sure of and that is that the farm or ranch belongs to the COACHELLA VALLEY FARMERS ASSOCIATION. Leland Yost

the mouthpiece for the Farmers Association will howl that this farmland tax swindle does not exist in Coachella Valley.

To the West of Riverside County is Orange County. Many of you did not see page 3 of the Los Angeles Times of Nov. 19, 1965 where there was an article headlined, "TAX ON IRVINE RANCH ASSAILED AS TOO LOW". In testimony before the Assembly Committee on Municipal and Co. Government, the office of the Attorney General of California gave this evidence about the property taxes paid by the Irvine Ranch consisting of 88,000 acres in Orange County. Deputy Attorney General Marshall Mayer testified that the Irvine Ranch should pay \$10½ millions yearly in taxes but only pays \$1½ millions. He said that each homeowner in Orange County is forced to pay \$36 more in yearly taxes to make up for the Irvine Ranch. This ranch escapes 85% of its correct taxes. In Coachella Valley, every ranch escapes at least 66% of its taxes.

Now as to the electricity swindle costing you about \$4 millions yearly. The California Public Utilities Commission is not given the authority by law to make the correct electricity rates charged you by the Imperial Irrigation District. This District and the Coachella Valley Water District, both controlled by the big ranchers, are in cahoots to exploit you residents for the benefit of the ranches.

The California Public Utilities Commission does not control the price of irrigation water sold to ranches in Imperial and Coachella Valleys. The Imperial Irrigation District sells both electricity and irrigation water in Imperial Valley. The Calif. Public Utilities Commission would not permit high prices for electricity so that the irrigation water could be sold BELOW COST to the ranches.

In Coachella Valley, the ranches are sold irrigation water BELOW COST by the Coachella District which has the water delivered to it by the Imperial Irrigation District. The Imperial District is then permitted to sell electricity at very high prices in the area where the Coachella District sells the BELOW COST irrigation water. The Coachella District in 1961 took over various water supply companies that served homes and businesses. This was done to confuse you to believe that homes and businesses were receiving large amounts of water from the Coachella District. The truth is that you only receive ¼ of 1% of all the water distributed by your District.

To the West of you, the Southern California Edison Co. supplies electricity at practically the same rates as the Imperial Irrigation District. But the price that Southern California Edison charges includes franchise taxes, city and county property taxes on its lines and substations, and Federal and State Income Taxes. THE IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT DOES NOT PAY ANY SUCH TAXES. Therefore, those who receive Imperial Irrigation District electricity, should have electricity bills which should be ½ of those who take Southern California electricity. Also you who live in the area of the Coachella District and use I.I.D. electricity, are forced to pay property taxes on the land that is under your home or business to the Coachella District. When this is added to your electricity bill, IT MEANS THAT YOU ACTUALLY PAY MORE FOR YOUR ELECTRICITY THAN THOSE USING SOUTHERN CALIF. ELECTRICITY.

Finally, the ranches in many instances use pumps for pumping water. The Imperial Irrigation District gives these ranches electricity rates which are 1/5 those that homeowners and businesses like motels, stores, etc. have to pay. IN PLAIN ENGLISH, YOU COACHELLA RESIDENTS ARE BEING PLAYED FOR SUCKERS BY THE BIG RANCHES. Remember that both the Coachella and Imperial Districts are controlled by the big ranchers and in your area particularly by LELAND YOST'S FARMERS ASSOCIATION.

So help to reduce property taxes and electricity bills by distributing this NEWSLETTER and future NEWSLETTERS. Pass the Newsletters from one to another so that all learn what is going on. WRITE TO DR. BEN YELLEN, COUNCILMAN OF BRAWLEY, BRAWLEY, CALIF. FOR MORE INFORMATION.

THE FOUNDATION OF A STRONG DEMOCRACY IS A WELL INFORMED CITIZENRY.