

February 28, 1978

# BEWARE OF TOM REES! HE IS A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING!

This warning is especially directed to Democrat Congressmen and liberal Republican Congressmen who represent people mainly living in cities. When Tom Rees was a Congressman a few years ago, he had the reputation of being a liberal Democrat. So it would be natural to think that when he became a lobbyist in Washington, D.C. that he would lobby for consumer groups, unions, etc.

BUT TOM REES HAS BEEN HIRED BY ULTRA CONSERVATIVE, BIG REPUBLICAN FARMERS OF IMPERIAL VALLEY TO LOBBY FOR CHANGES IN THE RECLAMATION LAW OF 1902 SO THAT THESE BIG AGRIBUSINESSMEN CAN CONTINUE IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW TO MAKE BIG PROFITS AND THE REST OF THE RESIDENTS HERE BE PREVENTED FROM FARMING HERE AND MAKING A LIVING AS SMALL FAMILY FARMERS.

At first, these big ultra conservative agribusinessmen using ultra conservative Congressman Clair Burgener as a spearhead, tried to stampede Congress into passing a Resolution to stop the Dept. of Interior from enforcing the law after we little people won the decision in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that the law must be enforced. To get this Resolution passed, these agribusinessmen hired a public relations firm named the Dolphin Group which works exclusively for ultra conservative candidates and causes.

This public relations firm put in that one page ad in the Washington(D.C.) Post of Oct. 25, 1977 in which a Larry Gilbert and his family, all looking very sad, claim the government is going to take from them all farmland in excess of 160 acres. Since homemade Newsletters like this Newsletter is the only publicity we little people can put out for we have no money to hire a bigtime public relations firm, the agribusinessmen never expected us to investigate how much farmland Larry Gilbert owns. The recorder's office in El Centro shows that Larry Gilbert owns only 80 acres. He rents about 700 acres to do his farming. Yet this big lie was repeated in one page ads in the San Francisco Chronicle, the Los Angeles Times and the San Diego Union. It must be pointed out that the Larry Gilbert family under the U.S. Reclamation Law as it now stands, would be entitled to farm 160 acres for each member of the family and since there are 6 in the family, it could farm 960 acres provided the absentee landowners who own 70% of the farmland are forced to sell the land as mandated by the U.S. Reclamation Law.

The Dolphin Group then filled the newspapers and radio and TV channels where these agribusinessmen now called themselves family farmers to give them a nice image. But the attempt to stampede Congress for a Resolution failed and the agribusinessmen realized that ultra conservative Congressman Clair Burgener was not an asset to their campaign. So very cleverly, the Dolphin Group looked about and picked on Tom Rees to lead their campaign to get the U.S. Reclamation Law changed.

Tom Rees is on friendly terms with you Democrat and liberal Republican Congressmen whereas Congressman Burgener is not. So it would be easy for Tom Rees to lobby you and since he had the reputation of a liberal Democrat, it would be easy for you to believe him when he tells how his employers whom he will call family farmers, are having an injustice done to them. So please keep this Newsletter for reference when Tom Rees comes to lobby you. Ask him questions about the facts here.

Here are the facts. The Colorado River at flood time in June, July and August would overflow the Western bank of the river and this water from the Mexican portion of the Colorado would flow into Mexico just below the Mexican-American border. The water would flow about 20 miles South of the border and then at Calexico, Calif. would turn North and flow into the United States for about 80 miles in what is now known as Imperial Valley. This happened long before Columbus discovered America.

A Mexican corporation cut a notch in the west bank so deep that water would flow during the entire 12 months of the year and make possible farming for 12 months to Mexican farmland and Imperial Valley farmland. But the engineering of the cut was so bad that in 1905, the watergate at the notch broke and with a large portion of the west bank also breaking so that the water flowed steadily for 2 years. If this break was not stopped, the entire Imperial Valley would be under water for it is all under sea level.

The Mexican corporation sold water wholesale to smaller companies in both Mexico and Imperial Valley and these in turn sold the water to the individual farmers. The American farmers appealed for help to President Theodore Roosevelt who then infringed on the sovereignty of Mexico by ordering the Southern Pacific Railroad to bring flat cars of rock from as far away as 600 miles to throw into the break. This succeeded in stopping the break but the Mexican corporation could not pay S. P. Railroad, so that the California Development Corporation which owned all the stock of the Mexican corporation, gave all its stock to the S.P.R.R.

The S.P.R.R. then ran the Mexican corporation for 5 years with the watergate and bank of the Colorado River threatening to break and causing the S.P.R.R. great expense. Then in 1912, the Imperial Irrigation District was created by the State of California. The S.P.R.R. then unloaded control of the Mexican wholesale water system on the I.D.D.

This was 12 years after the Mexican corporation cut the notch in the West bank of the Colorado River and using water in Mexican territory conducted it 70 miles through Mexico and then delivered the water to retailers at Calexico, Calif. THE FOREFATHERS OF THE PRESENT BIG FARMERS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CUTTING OF THE NOTCH AND NEVER BUILT THEIR OWN CANAL. The truth is the American Government saved their land from forever being under water.

The I.I.D. was bankrupt for 40 years with the heavy expenses of trying to prevent another break and by the fact that it could not deliver water steadily into Imperial Valley and thereby get water payments. When there was a shortage of water the Mexican farmland would get it first and then there would be insufficient water for Imperial Valley. Farmland uses 99 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the water and people use  $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the water. The newspapers of July 1935 all tell how the Southern Pacific R.R. brought in tank cars of water and the people went to the tankcars to get water to drink. Then in 1938, the Mexican Government confiscated foreign owned oil wells, mines, ranches, factories, these Mexican waterworks, etc. and the U.S. government saved the farmers here by hurrying up and building the All-American Canal for them for which they had lobbied for 23 years.

The so-called promise of Secretary Wilbur was just a political hatchet job done by a CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN, which the 9th Circuit Court of Appeal says is illegal. Secretary Ickes in M-33902 dated May 31, 1945 approved Solicitor Fowler Harper's opinion that the Coachella Valley which also receives water from the All-American Canal is subject to the 160 acres limitation. But despite the promise that it would be enforced in Coachella Valley, it has not been enforced just as it has not been enforced in the Imperial Irrigation District by political influence of the big farmers. Fowler Harper in his next to last paragraph in his opinion says Secretary Wilbur wrote this letter "solely for the purpose of giving partisan help to the Imperial Irrigation district". Harper pointed out that it was done 10 days before President Franklin D. Roosevelt was to take office.

A little farmer owning his land outright and farming 160 acres of poor land will make \$28,000 per year. If he farms good land, he will make \$56,000 per year. Good land rents for \$200 per acre per year and poor land rents for \$100 per acre. One acre here gives the production of 5 acres in Kansas. Therefore 54% of the farms are below 179 acres and the big farmers are trying to squeeze the little farmers out.