

Rollah E. Aston

AM

BOULDER DAM
AND
COTTON



CORPORATE AVARICE

v.

LIVES AND HOMES

Twenty-five years ago pioneers from Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and other states began reclaiming wonderful Imperial Valley in California. It took hard work and strong hearts. They finally turned the waters of the Colorado River into the valley and today that semi-tropical land produces great primary crops of lettuce, cantaloupes, citrus fruits and winter produce.

Fifteen years ago those citizens began appealing to Congress for aid to fight off the annual floods of the river which were steadily becoming more serious. Breaks had already occurred in the levees in Mexico which these American farmers were maintaining. After years the Federal Government through its engineers and officials recommended what has become the Swing Johnson bill for the Boulder Dam and the All American Canal.

Those 65,000 American citizens are hoping Congress will pass the bill during the coming session of the Seventieth Congress. But now that their relief is almost at hand private power corporations are fighting the bill. They have inspired opposition and certain letters are being written Southern congressmen and senators urging that they vote against the bill because—they allege—great cotton acreage will be added when the bill is passed. This malicious and unwarranted propoganda is the result of corporate avarice that cares nothing for the lives and homes of those people living below sea level.

Below is given a letter from the Imperial Irrigation District showing exactly what is expected. A copy of one of the letters which the law-makers are receiving is also attached.

Imperial Valley in the United States last season produced about 10,000 bales of cotton. On the Mexican side about 85,000 bales were produced. If the All American Canal is constructed Imperial Valley (U. S.) might possibly increase the amount to 20,000 bales and Mexico would remain at 85,000 to 100,000 bales. If the All American Canal is NOT constructed Imperial Valley will probably remain at 10,000 bales or less, but in Mexico production WILL PROBABLY INCREASE TO 350,000 to 500,000 bales. Which do you Southern cotton planters want? Elimination of competition by building the Boulder Dam and All American Canal or certain increase in competition with Mexico if the high dam and canal are not constructed.

Again—may the writer ask—what effect will even 20,000 bales of cotton grown in Imperial Valley by American farmers have on a 17,500,000 bale crop?

Once more—what effect will 500,000 bales grown by cheap Mexican and coolie labor in Mexico, practically duty free, have on the market?

If you are against the Boulder Dam and All American Canal and win, you will get the latter—if you want to save our 65,000 citizens and their farms and are for the Dam and Canal you will get the former.

F. W. GREER.

Columbia, S. C., July 18th, 1927.

Born in Mississippi, reared and schooled in Tennessee and Texas and now a farmer in Imperial Valley, California.

A FARMER'S APPEAL

DIRECTORS

C. W. Brockman
Ira Aten
W. O. Blair
Earl C. Pound
Mark Rose

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F. H. McIver, Sec'y-Treas.
M. J. Dowd, Chief Engineer
Charles L. Childers, Atty.
C. W. Barry, Assr. & Collr.

IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Organized July 25, 1911

Comprising 605,000 Acres

Mr. F. W. Greer,
Care Washington Hotel,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Greer:

We are informed through our people in the east that a deliberate effort is being made to propagandize the people in the cotton areas of the south that the Boulder Dam-All American Canal project is simply a cotton reclamation scheme to convert large desert acreages in Imperial Valley into cotton-producing lands.

The fact that enemies of the project, whose only concern in defeating it is to save power dam sites on the Colorado River for private corporation exploitation at the expense of the safety of our 65,000 Imperial Valley ranchers and the \$100,000,000 investment already here, have carried this sort of vicious and malignant misinformation into the cotton belt makes it palpably a fraud and a gross misrepresentation aimed to antagonize a people whose interests are now, and have been, very similar to our own interests; namely, conservation of our water resources and protection of our lands against inevitable flood.

This same contemptible attack against us has been made by these same interests in the middle west where the corn growers and wheat growers have, in times past, been told

that Imperial Valley is a direct competitor. It required no little effort on our part to offset that distortion of facts in that section and we still find evidences of misconception although no one who has ever visited Imperial Valley would for a moment believe that story because our corn is not ear corn but is milo maize and seldom reaches markets east of the Rockies and never is a competitor to mid-western corn.

Likewise we are now confronted with a distortion of our cotton-growing future and these alarmists, whose motives are in no way prompted by solicitude for the cotton growers of the south, are trying to destroy the support we have in those states. The following figures of cotton acreages in Imperial Valley OF MEXICO (Colorado River Land Co. syndicate), and cotton acreages in the AMERICAN Imperial Valley show conclusively the exact status of the cotton industry here. It is a waning industry, one that has been long since superseded on the American side of the line by more profitable enterprises, such as vegetable and citrus production.

Cotton acreages in Imperial Valley (U. S.) and Mexico :

	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>United States</i>
1924	170,126 acres	79,801 acres
1925	197,430 acres	47,253 acres
1926	145,348 acres	23,693 acres
1927	112,015' acres	20,300 acres

We do not claim that the All American Canal project is not a reclamation program, but we deny emphatically that its purpose is the increase of cotton lands. The mesa lands, now desert, which will in another decade or more be cultivated are, primarily, suited for citrus and vegetable growing rather than cotton culture. The texture of the soil is lighter than the present cultivated lands of the American Imperial Valley and the cost of reclaiming them will automatically make them vegetable and citrus producing lands.

The fact of the matter is that it is FAR MORE DANGEROUS TO THE COTTON BELT OF THE SOUTH to permit the Colorado River waters to continue unchecked in their flow, for every succeeding year finds rapid reclamation of lands in Mexico, all of which are at once planted to cotton. Ginning companies are constantly enlarging their plants in Mexicali and other Mexican points across the border to take care of the increasing cotton production there. On this side of the line most of the ranchers are cutting down their cotton acreages each year and planting in lieu other more remunerative crops. There is no ulterior motive in this. It is merely an economic condition based upon the soil and climate here which are conducive to rapidly growing highly intensively cultivated crops having a high market value. It is as much to our advantage to grow non-competitive crops in Imperial Valley as it is to other sections to keep us from competing.

Once the All American Canal is constructed, reclamation of Mexican lands will be curtailed materially and expansion of cotton growing lands there will cease. There will very likely be a small cotton acreage harvested in the American Imperial Valley each year for many years to come, but that acreage is insignificant as compared to the acreage in crop in Mexico. Our Farm Bureaus and University Extension service leaders are trying to interest our farmers in other agricultural pursuits each season and, as a result, there is a material decline in cotton raising that will, in all probability, continue in the future.

Yours very truly,

F. H. McIVER, Secretary-Treasurer.

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AN UNWISE LETTER

(Copy)

AMERICAN COTTON ASSOCIATION AND
BETTER FARMING CAMPAIGN

Field of Economic Production

Jones Building, Coffee Street

Greenville, S. C., June 3, 1927

Headquarters,

American Cotton Ass'n and Cotton News,

St. Matthews, S. C.

Hon. _____

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing for your special study and attention copy of a recent article which appeared in the *New York Times*. The basis of the article was largely inspired by hopes for the enactment of the Boulder Dam bill advocated by Senator Johnson of California.

It may interest you to know that I attended a conference of California farm leaders at Los Angeles last August, at which the subject of bringing in new farm lands by national irrigation projects came up for discussion. A resolution was unanimously passed calling upon Congress and the states to check any further tendency to increase the present farm acreage of the United States, on the ground that present production of all staple crops exceeded the demand to such an extent that market prices were unprofitable to the growers. This is a nationwide economic matter affecting the basic industry of this country which should receive the most careful consideration of senators and congressmen.

The present cotton acreage now exceeds by 20% the entire national acreage planted to wheat, and over-production of our chief staple crop in the south has forced prices

below the cost of production. The government should take a definite stand against all water projects or other methods that at this time will tend to an expansion of our present cultivated agricultural area. The farmers of the United States in all sections are opposed to such expansion under existing conditions and we trust that you will oppose any bills at this time having in view the opening up of new farm lands for cotton or any other staple crop until demand for such crops are more profitable to the growers. Expansion of markets are badly needed, but not increase in production.

With personal regards,

Yours very truly,

(Signed) HARVIE JORDAN,

Managing Director.

HJ/IS