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## Letter from Bigelow Neal to Representative Burdick Regarding Garrison Dam Pool Level, June 17, 1949

Bigelow Neal

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Bigelow Neal  
Garrison,  
N. D.

June 17, 1949.

Hon. Usher L. Burdick,  
House of Representatives Office Bldg.,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Usher,

Cripes, boy! can I copy your letter? It's a corker if I can but I shan't do it unless you advise me that I may.

I suppose you have thought about everything that there is to think about but one thing that has bothered me has been the remarkable difference between the effect of the 1,830 and the 1,850 foot levels. For instance east of where I live in the valleys of Snake Creek and in the lowlands extending as far east as Turtle Lake and north nearly to Max, there must be one or two or more townships that are being flooded by the extra 20 feet. It seems to me that is adding a tremendous amount of destruction when it does not appear to be absolutely essential.

Here's another point which you may or may not have thought of:

In establishing the value of land destroyed by the number of acres flooded, the engineers overlooked something commonly known to every resident of this country. Along the river, both in the lowlands and on the high prairies it has been customary for more than half a century to figure that an acre in the bottomlands was worth two to three acres on the high prairies. In other words when the engineers admit to destroying 400,000 acres of these lands, they are actually putting out of commission nearly a million acres of the most productive lands in North Dakota.

In so far as my articles for the Independent are concerned, you can see that I am carefully avoiding any friction with the engineers. When this job is finished, however, and I have occasion to write further, I may not be under those restrictions. What has made me sore, Usher, is the fact that they insisted upon building this outfit bottom-side-up. After damming the Missouri at Ft. Peck, why in hell's bells didn't they cut off the Yellowstone? Then they could have stopped, taken stock of themselves and gone ahead if it seemed feasible. As it is in damming from

downstream up, they make merely a first-class silt-trap of the dam which happens to be upstream last. And at the same time you will notice that probably to assuage the railroads, they have deliberately rendered the river unfit for navigation when they might have turned it into the greatest inland waterway in the world.

Thanks, Usher, thanks very much indeed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bigelow Neal". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a dashed line.

Bigelow Neal

WBN:ek