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## Letter from John Haw to Robert Masseur Regarding Northern Pacific Railway Company's Support for Garrison Diversion Project, October 23, 1957

John W. Haw

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# NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
AGRICULTURE AND IMMIGRATION

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A. R. MIESEN,  
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENT  
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

IN REPLY REFER TO FILE

ST. PAUL 1, MINN.

October 23, 1957

Mr. Robert F. Masee  
President  
North Dakota Reclamation Association  
Grand Forks, North Dakota

Dear Mr. Masee:

You will find attached a copy of the Northern Pacific statement to be presented at, and incorporated in the record of, the public hearing on the Garrison Diversion project in Devils Lake on October 30. I have been authorized to present this statement by the officers of this company.

Because of previous engagements, neither the writer nor Mr. Dexter can be present.

Mr. Dexter appeared before the House Subcommittee on Public Works Appropriations on May 15, 1957, in Washington, D.C., with a statement of similar import. The Northern Pacific's position favoring this project has thus been established in the record before two committees dealing with the Garrison Diversion project.

Yours sincerely,

Director  
Agricultural Development Department

JWH bg  
att.

cc: Honorable Otto Krueger  
Honorably Usher L. Burdick  
Mr. S. W. Thompson  
Mr. A. J. Dexter  
Mr. A. R. Miesen

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY

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PUBLIC HEARING ON GARRISON DIVERSION UNIT  
BEFORE  
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IRRIGATION AND RECLAMATION,  
COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

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DEVILS LAKE, NORTH DAKOTA, OCTOBER 30, 1957

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STATEMENT OF JOHN W. HAW, DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT,  
NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY, FAVORING.

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Recurrent periods of drouth in North Dakota have caused severe farm distress and have interrupted a healthy growth in the state's general economy. In 1934 and again in 1936, drouth paralyzed crop production and resulted in heavy liquidation of breeding herds and flocks. These two drouth years brought about widespread farm foreclosures and depleted the resources of the state's business interests, as well as of its farmers. The Northern Pacific Railway has a large stake in North Dakota, and the reduction in the normal traffic from farm products during those years made necessary economies of drastic character to preserve the solvency of the property.

Other crucial drouth periods, though of less intensity, have occurred in the brief history of the state's agriculture. In fact, in most years, the states in the Northern Plains suffer periods which vary from a few weeks to a month when crop yields are limited by inadequate moisture supplies. Recent years of more satisfactory rainfall indicate that bountiful harvests can occur when sufficient moisture is available during the crop season. However, rare indeed would be the year when two or three irrigations would not double or treble the yields on crops produced by natural rainfall of varying amount and

frequently poorly timed.

Irrigation in North Dakota is not a matter of bringing new land into production, nor will its establishment result in releasing new products on the market in glut proportions. Rather, irrigation is a means of correcting the moisture fluctuations common to dry-land agriculture. It is a smoothing out of the production pattern, with development of a farm economy not based as at present on production of cereal grains. The Garrison Diversion project, when fully developed, thus will ease the threat of drouth and will go a long way toward eliminating the loss of crops and livestock in the irrigated portions of the state. In addition, this area will be a reliable source of feed for livestock on adjacent nonirrigated lands. The project also will have a salutary effect on the entire economy of North Dakota. The Northern Pacific Railway is in accord with the present effort to move the Garrison Diversion project into the final planning and construction stage. We supported the program for building Garrison dam notwithstanding the elimination of thousands of acres of productive valley lands tributary to our railroad inundated by the backwater line of the reservoir.

Diversion of water from this reservoir for irrigation has been a basic and integral part of the entire Missouri Basin project from the time it was first proposed. The Bureau of Reclamation in its investigations has demonstrated the practicability and the economic feasibility of this project. Landowners within the project boundaries have cheerfully assumed the responsibility of organizing irrigation districts as a basis for entering into contractual obligations for the repayment of project costs assigned to them.

We trust your committee will consider favorably legislation which will result in the early diversion of waters impounded behind Garrison dam to the central portion of North Dakota for the threefold purpose of irrigation, municipal water supplies and sewage abatement.