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Letter from Representative Burdick to Michael W. Straus Regarding a Letter from Gordon Myer, September 6, 1949

Usher L. Burdick

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September 6, 1949.

J. - Dec

Commissioner Michael W. Straus,
Bureau of Reclamation,
Interior Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Straus:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr. Gordon Myer
of Valley City, North Dakota.

Mr. Myer seems to have a just complaint and I will appreciate your looking into the matter right away.

Sincerely,

Usher L. Burdick, m.c.

Valley City, North Dakota
August 25, 1949.

C
O
P
Y

The Honorable Usher L. Burdick,
The House of Representatives
Washington, D C

My dear Congressman Burdick:

I am writing to solicityour help. I am one of the farmers being moved off my farm on account of the Baldhill Dam project.

Last spring at a public meeting at Valley City brought about by the Governor and, as I understood it by our representatives in Washington, the Army Engineers stated that they were all prepared and ready to buy the land of the farmers affected in the basin which had not been already acquired. They promised to do this during the summer of 1949. They were unwilling to admit this until forced to at this meeting.

The Engineers have been around and bought small parcels of land, or at least entered into agreements. There were no homes on the lands dealt for, and after all the important ones are the farms on which there are families who will lose their homes with no way of replacing them. I am sure we will have to move this year but I am at a loss to know what to do. Owing to the income-tax structure, it is impossible to go out and buy land until I have received cash for my farm that I am loosing. Both transactions must be completed in the same fiscal year.

For this reason I will have no land for a crop next year. This is a serious matter to me and I see no reason why we should be penalized in this fashion through no fault of our own.

It appears that there will be a repetition of the procedure following in the fall of 1948 when farmers between my place and the dam were given 15 day notice to evacuate their farms. To the best of my knowledge, part of this previously condemned land has not been settled for or any attempt, in some cases, made to settle for it. This condemnation procedure was contrary to the original promise that all land was to be acquired previous to construction of the dam. It was this promise which prompted local sponsoring organizations to give general acceptance of the whole project.

On the basis of the above, my fear is that it may be a year, or even two or more years, before a settlement is agreed upon. Meanwhile, it is impossible for me to proceed with any plan for a farm to replace the one that will be taken by condemnation proceedings. Also, during that period I will not have any farm from which to derive an income.

Anything you could do to get some action and force the Army Engineers to fulfill their obligations in acquiring our land would be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully yours,

/s/

Gordon Myer,
Box 126
Valley City, North Dakota.

copy to:
Senator Milton Young
Senator William Langer
Congressman William Lemke
Governor Fred G. Aandahl