

Checked

(HEADLINES)

(See list of names on page ____)

Did you on February 23, 1943 own or have a contract to purchase land that was on the assessment roll of the Priest Rapids Irrigation District? If you did, or know anyone who did, you should read the list of names published at the end of this article.

The district's liquidating trustees do not have addresses of many persons who apparently are entitled to share in distribution on the district's assets, about \$300,000.00. A first distribution of about \$200,000.00 will commence at an early date, if the Benton County court approves the liquidating trustees' proposal. The proposal is to commence promptly a distribution of about \$30.00 per acre to the February 23, 1943 owners or contract purchasers of approximately 6000 acres which were then on the district's assessment roll. Final distribution would follow a court hearing on expenses of the district's dissolution proceeding and exact computation of the distributive shares. The distribution is expected to total \$45 to \$50 per acre for the 6000 acres.

The proposal for a prompt partial distribution was announced by Bert Salvini, Chairman of the liquidating trustees. Now a resident of Yakima, he was a member of the district's Board of Directors on February 23, 1943 when the United States started condemnation of the district's lands and properties as part of a 200,000 acre acquisition for the Hanford project. The other liquidating trustees are R. S. Reiersen, now of Spokane, and J. H. Evett,

now of Yreka, California. They too were members of the district's board in 1943.

Mr. Salvini said "the former landowners have been kept waiting more than ten years by the Government's long litigation. And now that the litigation with the Government has ended, they ought to get some of their money right away."

The ten year litigation ended last summer when Judge MacIver of Yakima, as a visiting Judge of the Benton County Court, rejected in its entirety the claim of the United States to the assets of the district. In previous years the Government had carried its contention to appellate courts three times. In the Federal condemnation proceeding the Government twice went to the Federal court of Appeals at San Francisco. And in state court dissolution proceedings, the Government went to the State Supreme Court in 1951. Last summer Bernard H. Ramsey, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, recommended that the Government appeal from Judge MacIver's latest ruling in the dissolution proceeding, but the Department of Justice finally decided to quit fighting against the former landowners.

The persons entitled to distribution of the district's assets, according to the ruling of Judge MacIver, are those who on February 23, 1943 owned outright or were contract purchasers of some 480 tracts which made up the 6000 acres on the assessment roll.

To assist the court and the owners and contract purchasers of the assessment paying lands in the district, the liquidating trustees and their attorneys have made up a list of those who apparently were the February 23, 1943 owners or contract purchasers of the 6000 acres. The list was compiled principally from the district's last assessment roll and partly from Federal Court records of payment for individually owned tracts of land within the district. The last assessment roll was made up in November 1942, and the payments by the United States to the individual landowners were made in the spring of 1943 and later.

Where the district in November 1942 assessed a tract to the

same owner or contract purchaser who received payment for the tract from the Government in 1943 or later, that person in all probability is the person entitled to that tract's distributive share. The court may be willing to pay him upon his executing an affidavit in a form to be prescribed by the court. Where it is uncertain as to who was the owner or contract purchaser of a tract on February 23, 1943, the court probably will require a more complete showing as to whom the money should be paid. In case of death of the February 23, 1943 owner or contract purchaser, those who have succeeded to the interest will have to give evidence of their right. Also, divorces since February 23, 1943 may complicate some cases. But the trustees hope that the complicated cases will be few in number.

The trustees and their attorneys emphasize that there may be some errors in the list of names which they have yet not been able to correct. Some persons listed may have deeded or contracted to sell their tracts to other individuals before February 23, 1943. In such cases the grantees or contract purchasers would be the ones entitled to payments. With those notes of caution, the trustees requested the Tri-City Herald and Yakima papers to publish the list of names and the last known addresses of some. The addresses may or may not be correct. It is hoped that those readers of the Tri-City Herald who were acquainted with the old Hanford and White Bluffs areas and residents will read the list of names, and when possible will supply information regarding the addresses of the persons listed. The information should be mailed to the Tri-City Herald, Kennewick, or to Moulton, Powell, Gess & Loney, Kennewick.

As soon as the court approves a plan and method for distribution of the Priest Rapids Irrigation District's assets, letters will be addressed to the persons apparently entitled to share, advising them as fully as possible as to their apparent right to receive money and as to what they must do to establish definitely their right and receive payment.

The Tri-City Herald is very happy to have opportunity to help

carry good news to the former landowners and contract purchasers of lands in the Priest Rapids Irrigation District. The list of names compiled by the liquidating trustees and their attorneys reads as follows: