

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. President and members, we've spent a lot of time with water and I hope that we don't take all afternoon. Many of the things that I have written down here that I want to talk about have already been mentioned such as the fact that I'm not sure that irrigation wells really affect wet meadows and lakes to the extent that some people would like to have us believe and Senator Schmit I believe mentioned the lakes in the '30s were dry. In the dry years you're going to have dry meadows no matter whether you have irrigation or not. I guess the thing that bothers me the most and I talked to quite a few people from the sandhills and of course have been affected with land that is subirrigated all my life. What does a rancher do if we get a dry spell and his wet meadows go dry? What does he feed his cows? What he is going to do he is going to have to have some irrigation in order to supplement his feed supply. I have a feeling that those who support this bill so strongly think that in some way it is going to stop the development of irrigation in the sandhills. Now I suggest that if that is your attitude and what you want to do, there is surely a better way than hurting the people that are there now and finding a way to slow down the insurance companies or whoever may be moving in. If you think you are going to stop them with this legislation, you are going to find out that they are going to be there and it is going to be too late to do anything about it anyhow. In the last several weeks I've been quite surprised to find the attitude of people that seem to think that underground aquifer that we have, whether it be in the sandhills or under any part of Nebraska is like a big old bathtub full of water and every time somebody puts a straw in and starts drawing a little bit out, why there is that much less for everybody else. That really is not true at all. It may be true in certain sections of our state but it certainly is not true in general. I remember back in the early '40s when wells were going into my particular area where I live and we were putting them in ourselves very rapidly. You could see well rigs working all the time, many of the old-timers especially and some of the people that lived in other areas would say, well you guys are going to pump all the water out and there is not going to be any left and you go back to desert, the same story we are hearing right now. Well it didn't happen. In fact, the water table went up. One thing you have to remember that even though you are irrigating you are only irrigating a couple months out of the year and the water that you pull out and put back on the ground, some of it goes back in. I think that it is too bad that Howard Lamb hasn't had a chance to speak yet. I'm sure he will speak. He probably knows more about this than all the rest of us put together, living up in that area. I know that they have what we would call streams or creeks or sloughs in our area that up in his area have no end. They just soak into the aquifer into the underground water table and that is fed by the