

happening in the Sandhills, that is where the power ought to be. That is on a local basis. That authority is already there and it seems to me that this Legislature ought to ask those county boards to take that authority and use that authority but water is an entirely different issue. It seems to me that we have addressed that issue in LB 375 on this floor this year. We ought to give that legislation an opportunity to work and to monitor it and if it needs changing we can change it. For us to put onto the floor two different water issues that are actually related in this session it seems to me would be a huge mistake. So I would urge this body to turn this bill down.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I have not spoken very often on the issues involving water or on soil and land management mostly because I do come from Omaha. I do not have an agricultural background nor am I so knowledgeable about water issues and the workings of the Natural Resource Districts and the like that I can say definitively that this is an extremely fine bill or not such a fine bill. What I do recognize this measure for what it is addressing and what it is addressing very simply are some very fragile lands in the Sandhills. This weekend my father, Wilbur Johnson, came to Omaha to visit me. He grew up in Clearwater, Nebraska, Senator DeCamp, and he owns a portion of a farm now outside of Clearwater. My father and I, when I was a young boy, spent much time in the Sandhills. We would go to Goose Lake and we would go to Swan Lake and we would fish. We would be in these very pristine, beautiful parts of our state and every time that I as a young boy with my father would go up to the Sandhills, I would really rejoice. I would really rejoice in that environment because for some reason to me that bespoke the true rural flavor of Nebraska, blue skies and the green lands and the water and the animals. It was a marvelous time. My father was with me this weekend and we got to talking for just a few minutes about what the Legislature has done in the area of water and the like and my father said that he has a hard time going home anymore. He said, "I have a hard time going back to Neligh, going back to Clearwater and going into the Sandhills because I have really seen the destruction of the land." He said the old areas that used to be the rolling grassy hills are now lined with center pivots and the corn is coming in and coming in and of course the farmers can't get even a reasonable price for the corn so we have great surpluses for which there is not adequate buyers. And he said it's a shame, an absolute shame to see an area that you knew and you loved and it is part of your heart, literally destroyed by the cupidity of people and