

particular natural wonder in Nebraska. I might also point out that I think this is an opportunity to help us recover from whatever negative perceptions we might have outside the state as the result of a major tourist area being devastated by fire. Much of the press coverage and much of the response that I got was, well, there is probably no reason to go out there anymore. It is all burned up, isn't it? My answer to people is, no, it isn't all burned up. The historic area of the Fort is intact. We lost 48,000 acres of some private and some public land, fortunately with a few small sheds and windmills and fences. Most of the loss were trees and grass, and so the area is very much still a wonderful attraction in the State of Nebraska and it is something that I think if we take the lead from the State of Wyoming, very quickly after the Yellowstone fire, they got busy and promoted that area and tried not to let that affect the economy of their state and to continue to bring people in. And so I am asking you to favorably consider this request today and to get us down the road towards developing what will be a one of its kind...one of a kind attraction, frankly, in the United States, even in the world, and I think that is going to bring money into the state. I know it is going to bring money into the state, it is good for education, and we have the responsibility to do this, and this responsibility has been overlooked too long. So I would ask you to advance LB 898 today. Thank you very much.

SENATOR LABEDZ PRESIDING

SENATOR LABEDZ: Senator Schmit on the advancement of LB 898.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, and members, I do not want to be a sore loser but, Senator Scofield, I must vigorously protest an expenditure of \$5 million at a time when we are probably overdrawn at the bank anyway. We are going to hear time after time after time about the shortage of money, justifiably so, and I cannot help but think that if you are going to make an investment, it ought to be made in the future of Nebraska so that you can provide for the protection of the elderly, take care of the sick, as Senator Wesely and Lynch proposed a little bit ago, and to provide for the children of this state, and I have great respect for history, and I have tremendous respect for the artifacts you have out there. I would suggest they probably can be protected adequately by fireguards and some other methods which I am sure can be taken care of. Your plea for the protection based upon the fire threat does not fall deaf