

as possible what their farming options are going to be this next year. LB 948 is a bill I hope the body will look friendly upon. I will be glad to answer any questions that I possibly can.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Senator Rod Johnson.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Madam President, members of the body, the Natural Resources Committee did conduct a hearing on this issue, a rather lengthy hearing. We heard from a number of testifiers. This has been a fairly high or widespread publicitywise issue that I'm sure most of you are familiar with and understand. I guess there is blame to go around to just about everyone involved, Central Public Power and Irrigation District, the Department of Water Resources, maybe this Legislature in a sense, but if there is going to be punishment, I guess, administered if that is, in fact, the word you want to be use. It should not be on a third party which, in fact, is an innocent third party which is the farmers who have these acres under questionable permits at this point. Whatever happened, happened and that's behind us now. I guess what Senator Schrock is asking is that we look forward, that we address the issue of giving water rights even though they are temporary to these farmers for this growing season and next, to give them at least some stability to their farming operations, to make plans for this coming growing season and obviously not have to go through the expense and time of drilling possibly new wells because without irrigation, as has been pointed out to us by a number of lenders in the area, it's going to have a significant economic impact upon the farmers of that area. Out of this turmoil I guess some good things have happened. There was a historic agreement reached between the national and state wildlife federation with Central about delivering a more efficient system of water to these irrigators. I think that is something that we have to mention is a benefit that came out of all this. Again, if you have questions or if you are disgusted or frustrated with maybe the way that Central has operated, there is a separate bill, in fact, that will be heard by the Natural Resources Committee this coming Wednesday to merge Central with NPPD. Whether you agree with that bill or not, I think that's, if you want to vent some frustration towards Central that's probably the area that you want to do it. In this case, as Senator Schrock has indicated, we're talking about the third parties involved in this case and giving them water for at least a two-year period. I don't know, I don't think anyone knows what