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FLOOR DEBATE

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center-pivot irrigation system had not been invented, we perhaps would not have the problems we're experiencing now. I do need to ask Senator Schrock a question, so that I won't misrepresent what he has said, or his position.

SPEAKER BROMM:    Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK:    Yes, I'll answer.

SENATOR CHAMBERS:    Senator Schrock, have irrigators...has irrigation created the problems that are being addressed by this bill?

SENATOR SCHROCK:    Yes they have.    But I'll also comment that irrigation has made an oasis out of Nebraska, which otherwise would have been a virtual desert the last two years. It's made a garden...it's made this a garden state.

SENATOR CHAMBERS:    This is a garden state with a 300-and-something million dollar shortfall. That's an...that's not a victory garden, is it?

SENATOR SCHROCK:    No, but I think things are turning around, Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS:    Now, that could have two meanings.    Which direction will the state be going after it has turned all the way around? Will it be going backward toward greater debt or shortfalls in terms of revenue coming in? Or will it be turning around in the sense of more jobs, more prosperity for everybody in the state, and not just those big shot investors who are getting the handouts from the Legislature? Which will be the case, based on your statement that the state is turning around?

SENATOR SCHROCK:    Well, the Forecasting Board, I guess, gave us that answer Friday.    But I guess I will tell you that without irrigation, there are certain geographic areas of this state that would be pretty destitute.    And irrigation has been the lifeblood of certainly many rural areas of this state.    And like I said, it is...it's made a garden out of a state that once was called a great wasteland.