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FLOOR DEBATE

March 4, 2004            LB 962

can get ahead of it now, because we was going...doing all right. As long as there wasn't a drought on we was doing all right as far as regulating and everything. But the drought just coupled on and just made it that much worse.

SENATOR BEUTLER:     You're thinking the drought brought on the need for the whole state, or just up in your area?

SENATOR JONES:     No, I think it brought it on for the whole state. The Republican River, they was handling it in the upper end of that. But with no rain and no water in the Republican River right now, it's empty. And everything is coming out of the west and flowing east, so we just do not have the water. So that's another reason I think that we're going to have to have this bill now to get ahead of it.

SENATOR BEUTLER:     Okay. Up in your area of the state, could matters be resolved just by an occasional litigation in the court system?

SENATOR JONES:     In my district they could. But you realize, my district covers just a lot of Sandhills that don't have a lot of the irrigation, like, until you get in the Platte River. And so...but where they really have the problem right now is above McConaughy, where they just drilled thousands of wells because of the drought, and they could see that their surface water was going to disappear.

SENATOR BEUTLER:     In the Platte Valley.

SENATOR JONES:     Yes, in the Platte Valley.

SENATOR BEUTLER:     Okay.

SENATOR JONES:     That's all south of me, but that's...I'm on the north side of the state, and the Republican on the south, and that Platte River comes right down through the middle. And that's where it's really the trouble started.

SENATOR BEUTLER:     Okay. Well, up in your area where you have very few irrigation wells, and mostly sandhills and pasture, of