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FLOOR DEBATE

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lived in all my life, and I'm quite familiar with it, and I hold that area quite dearly to me. It's a special breed of people, and it's a special area. It's a...around 20,000 square miles of the biggest sand dune area in the western hemisphere. It covers...it's mostly...the only sand dune area that's entirely grassed over. Now to get back to what it was like when the homesteaders came. I grew up around homesteaders all the time--my grandparents, my neighbors, all of them. So I know what they tell you and what they see. And word of mouth and firsthand observation is probably...can't be beat, as far as these people were concerned. But when they came to the country, my...as I said, what my mother told me is, where they homesteaded, the only green grass there was on the whole section of land that they homesteaded was a little strip around the lake. There was nothing but sand. Now, the reason for that was between the prairie dogs, the prairie fires. The buffalo had been off of there for about 25 years. These were all something that, in the grasslands of Nebraska, on that part of the area, had ruined the ecosystem. Prairie dogs...and like I tell people that want prairie dogs, I wish you would have them, but remember, rattlesnakes go with them. And my dad always told about that when they had the prairie dogs around there, why, they had rattlesnakes all the time. And this is how the kids, when they walked back from school, usually amused themselves, was throwing cow chips at prairie dogs so that they'd get to striking themselves and that sort of thing. So this is how it was done back in the early days. I think this is something that we have to remember that, sure, these are rodents. And that's the reason I'm not mentioning an eradication program. They need to be managed. They're no doubt part of the ecosystem. But you have to remember that when they become overpopulated, it's like any other animal on the face of the earth. They become overpopulated, and Mother Nature will find a way to eradicate them completely. Now, the problem usually is, is bubonic plague. If they get overpopulated, usually that's what goes into them is something like that. And when that happens, then it wipes out the entire colony, not only to say that it is a detriment and a danger to the...to people that are near those areas, because bubonic plague can be contracted. We know there is that in the area in southwestern...or, southeastern Wyoming. Last summer, there was a person who contracted bubonic plague