

SENATOR LEWIS: Senator Kahle.

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. President and members of the body, I always hesitate to get up and speak before this body if I feel I really don't know my subject, but I have been an irrigator for forty-five years now...one of the early ones along with Senator Kremer, and I think we value water a little bit higher than some others in this body. For one thing, we have a little bit different situation out further west in Nebraska and we get about ten inches less rain per year than, for instance, Senator Merz does, so I think we have a different problem in that respect. I guess the whole thing boils down to one thing, and it's whether we want controls on the use of water in Nebraska or not, and how we want to do it. Personally, I feel that the way that we're going with the NRD districts is probably the best way. It may be proven wrong in the years to come. If these units cannot function...if they cannot do what we are asking them to do, I'm sure they're going to fail, and I don't know how to encourage them more than to give them the proper funding that they may need to do the job. And personally, I really don't care whether it's within the seven percent, or not, I think it has to be done. And if it's that important to the State of Nebraska, why we certainly can find the ways to fund it. I guess one thing that really upsets me about all this...I remember the discussion that we had, I believe it was last year or the year before, when Omaha was talking about putting a well field in Sarpy or Saunders County, and the wounded buffalo moans that we heard from some of the senators from that area. Now that's the same kind of deal that's going to happen all over the State of Nebraska that we're going to have to face one way or the other. And if we run out of water in western Nebraska, or central Nebraska, you're sure going to run out here, because that's where it comes from. So I think that things that we've heard from some of the eastern senators here where irrigation is not a big thing, are still going to be concerned because the water they drink out of the tap, whether they live in town, or the country, is going to come from that aquifer and if we don't protect it, there won't be any. I worry about what was said about western Nebraska, and the land that will be revalued to a higher valuation and I'm sure this is going to happen. But I assure you one thing, if their water table keeps going down, the value of that land is not going to go up. It's going to go down. So you're going to have two problems instead of one...low valuation and no water. I'm not sure whether we need the quarter percent, or the half percent or the three-quarters percent, but personally, I feel that the NRD districts in my area, and in the areas that I know about...there are about four or five of them involved in my district, are doing