

Senator McGOVERN. The next witness will be Mr. James Sperry, secretary, West Brown Irrigation District.

**STATEMENT OF JIM SPERRY, SECRETARY, WEST BROWN IRRIGATION DISTRICT, BROWN COUNTY, S. DAK.**

Mr. SPERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am Jim Sperry, secretary of the West Brown Irrigation District in Brown County, S. Dak. Here with me today are Harold Smith, Virgil Locken, and LaVerne Swenson. All are members of the West Brown board of directors and all of us are also full-time grain and livestock farmers in this irrigation district.

We represent 383 landowners who farm 81,000 acres in the West Brown district. We organized our irrigation district with the intention of doing all we could to facilitate the rapid development of the Oahe unit. As South Dakotans, we contributed 509,000 acres of land to the four reservoirs on the Missouri River, resulting in an economic production loss of \$9,213,000 annually, according to the Oahe unit report. We all consider irrigation as an important part of the compensation for these acres lost when the Missouri River reservoirs were created.

We have just completed the most bountiful small grain harvest our area of South Dakota has ever seen. It was a result of plentiful rainfall along with moderate temperatures during the growing season. Our corn crop is not so fortunate, however. It is nearly 2 months now since we have received any general rainfall. As a result, corn yields will be something less than average and in many cases will have values only as silage.

So you see, even in a good year, supplemental moisture can be extremely valuable, and in a normal year our expected yields would be raised considerably by irrigation.

Because of these facts, I am very optimistic about our future prospects as an irrigated area. I feel that the increased productivity, as well as the increased assurance of harvesting a crop will lead to improved income levels for those of us on the farm, as well as our city cousins.

I realize that bringing water here and developing our land to receive it will require much work and planning in addition to large financial investment. As the father of two boys and one girl now attending school, I am willing to help undertake the development of this project which will quite possibly be delivering water here by the time my children are ready to establish homes and begin careers of their own.

I hope that the stimulating effect of irrigation on the South Dakota economy will make it possible for my children, as well as my neighbor's children, to find opportunity here in South Dakota, rather than migrating to more densely populated areas of our country.

In closing, the directors of the West Brown Irrigation District would like to urge approval of the Oahe irrigation project so that the Missouri River development program, started over 20 years ago, may proceed.

Senator McGOVERN. Thank you very much, Mr. Sperry, for your statement.