

Thank you, Senator McGovern.

Senator MCGOVERN. Thank you for your statement.

Is Senator Heidepriem in the room now? Senator, we will be happy to hear from you now. Senator Heidepriem is the senator from Hand, Spink, and Hyde Counties.

**STATEMENT OF STATE SENATOR HERBERT A. HEIDEPRIEM,
MILLER, S. DAK.**

Mr. HEIDEPRIEM. Senator McGovern, Senator Burdick, and Senator Moss, my name is Herbert A. Heidepriem and I am a State senator from the 19th Senatorial District for South Dakota, comprised of Hand, Hyde, and Spink Counties, and appear here today because the people of this district are vitally interested in the development of irrigation in central South Dakota. As an indication of this interest, I can tell you that these counties generally followed the State average of 80 percent favorable vote in approving the recent referendum on contracting authority for the Oahe Conservancy Subdistrict, and that's a landslide in any politician's book.

Spink County, of course, is vitally interested because a substantial portion of the proposed irrigation area is located in this county. Some irrigation is expected in the other two counties also, and many secondary benefits are anticipated.

These counties are classified as semiarid. The favorite diversion during most of the year is gazing at the clouds and speculating on when it will rain and whether the crops can last till it does. It often does, and in good years, this is a leading area in the production of cattle, wheat, and hay.

Nevertheless, the economic plight of the farmer and the townspeople who depend on him in this area is tragic. As a country lawyer, I have occasion to prepare income tax returns for farmers. I see year after year above, hard-working men with substantial investment in land, machinery, and livestock going further behind. Also, in my capacity as country lawyer, I frequently have the dubious pleasure of presiding over the demise of a farmstead—drawing the contracts whereby one neighbor buys out another, leaving one less farm family on the land, a remaining farm family deeply in debt, and another empty set of farm buildings.

Irrigation can change all this. The certainty of moisture can avoid for the farmer the disaster which awaits when the rains don't come. Irrigation can mean smaller units and more farmers remaining on the soil.

I am sure there will be those appearing today who are much better qualified than I to discuss the ramifications of the Oahe project as far as this immediate area is concerned. The thing I would like to emphasize in my remarks to you, is not the benefit of the development of this project to central South Dakota, or to the State of South Dakota, but rather to this country as a whole. The stability which can come to rural America through development of this and similar projects can be the means of saving rural America. And rural America is fast slipping away. Statistics available to me show that 8½ million people have left the farm since 1950, and half of these left since 1960, 750,000