

March 9, 1979

LB 359

present time we have obligated virtually all of the funds that have been appropriated. Now the question I want to ask this body is this. What happens to the Lower Platte North, the Rawhide Creek project around Fremont, if at some future time this Legislature decides to live up to their promise to the people that we are not going to spend a lot of money and that we cut back on the amount of money that we appropriate to the development fund? What happens if because of the proliferation of funds we decide to put two million dollars or a million dollars into the conservation fund, money which goes direct to farms, and cut back the amount of money for the development fund? How many of you know that at the same time that we have a conservation fund and a development fund, we also have a small watershed fund?

PRESIDENT: You have thirty seconds.

SENATOR SCHMIT: A small watershed fund most of you just don't realize, you voted for LB 31 awhile back. Senator Warner and I voted against the bill. But that makes it easier to transfer funds from one source to another. The point I want to make is this, the more we dilute these funds between various funds the less likely they are to be effective. We have an opportunity here to allow the commission to make the decision as to whether the money goes to the development fund or the conservation fund, but if it becomes a jockeying point between the two funds, I can tell you very frankly that there will be tax dollars expended on the behalf of lobbying rather than on the behalf of soil conservation projects. I would ask the committee not to kill the bill but to advance the bill and to definitely provide some guidelines in the upcoming budget bill as to how these funds should be expended and I have some evidence as to how they have been expended in the past and I think it is important and I want to make one more point. When this bill became law, the half a million dollars that was provided was divided equally between the twenty-four Natural Resource Districts. The Papio received exactly the same amount of money as the White River Natural Resource District. I think it is important to know that we did not utilize, we did not determine, we did not allocate the money on the basis of need, project requirement or anything else. We just lumped it off. It had to be done in a hurry. We sent \$20,800 out to each Natural Resource District. It has been used in a variety of ways. I do not disagree with many of the projects that have been performed but I do say that there isn't any way that