

March 9, 1979

LB 359

SENATOR MARSH: No, sir, they cannot.

SENATOR KEYES: They have to be used for soil conservation?

SENATOR MARSH: Yes.

SENATOR KEYES: And yet habitat is a very good soil conservation.

SENATOR MARSH: That is right. Habitat is a very necessary thing, too, but that is funded a different way.

SENATOR KEYES: Okay. Senator Schmit, can you tell me how these funds, who arrives at the use of the funds and so forth?

PRESIDENT: Senator Schmit, will you respond?

SENATOR SCHMIT: As I understand, Senator Keyes.

SENATOR KEYES: Then I will quit. I am through.

SENATOR SCHMIT: The funds are allocated back by district, and as I said, went back to the tune of \$20,800 per district. There were a number of allocations from each district, of course, through the Natural Resource District office up to the advisory board and the Natural Resources Commission. It is my understanding, at least I know that in some districts, the Natural Resource Districts made the recommendation as to how they should be spent. I have no quarrel with that. My quarrel, Senator Keyes, is that \$20,000, \$17,346 of it which was spent on two farms in the Lower Elkhorn area, and the Lower Elkhorn area covers I would guess something like three or four counties in northeastern Nebraska. I would suggest that that is not a major contribution to soil conservation practices in that area and it is my principal concern that if we continue to fund the conservation fund the only way it can be effective is if we spend twenty times the amount of money we are putting into it. We are not going to do that so I will tell you what is going to happen. The money is going to be spent principally in areas perhaps where there might be political problems to satisfy some concern in a local area and I think it is wrong. I think that it is impossible, there may even be a question as to whether or not the state is authorized to make a direct grant to an individual to the extent of \$12,000. As I said before, passage of the law does not necessarily make it constitutional and I think that we should take a long hard look because we have many requests. We already have twice as many requests for funds for the