

March 19, 1980

LB 1002

for me to ask him some questions now?

SPEAKER MARVEL: We are speaking at the moment to the Lewis amendment. Do you want to ask questions of Senator Schmit after we get through the Lewis amendment? You can do that if you would like.

SENATOR POWERS: I'd like to. Can I ask you now? Senator Schmit,...

SPEAKER MARVEL: No.

SENATOR POWERS: I will wait. I'm sorry. I will wait.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay. Senator Koch, your light was on.

SENATOR KOCH: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will speak to the amendment of Herr Schmit along with that, of my good friend, Senator Lewis. I guess, Senator Schmit, that I have been sitting around here for the last five years waiting for some meaningful water legislation. I have been looking to you and others for that leadership but I read the newspapers frequently and I see your speeches. I am a little concerned about your remarks that each individual is always so unselfish that they will not waste a great resource. Yet I do enough traveling in this state to know that there is a great deal of land under irrigation and which is absolutely atrocious in terms of how we are misusing water, nitrates and a lot of other kinds of resources which in the end are going to complicate the whole issue. I happen to believe and this is only in my own position, that NRDs are like county reorganization committees. They are not going to be able to handle the tough issue in terms of emotion and decisions which are growing more difficult each and every day. I am disappointed that on this floor of this session we have not talked about water legislation which is any deeper than the Platte River which is about one inch deep and a mile wide. Until this Legislature is willing to grapple with some tough decisions and possibly take the control and meter if we have to, and deny where we have to, and test the soil to determine what the holding power is so we don't have to pour tons and tons of nitrates and keep the water pumping twenty-four hours a day even when it is raining to prevent a sand dune from developing like I have seen in Franklin County. These things bother me and so we can sit here and talk to all we want to about another two dollars a person for conservation and impoundment of water. To me we can do it in the way we irrigate. I have a feeling we are using too much water and we will still get the same