

up more than they are now. I hate to say that, but I think that's what is going to happen. And when they start drying up at a more accelerated rate and don't forget, even in this last ten years in good times, our number of farms dropped from 67,000 to 60,000. Now there is going to be a more precipitous drop. As the number of farms decreases, as the towns dry up, voluntary, if you want to call it that, consolidation is going to have to take place. Senator Barrett said 130 occurred even in the good times of the last few years. That pace is going to be accelerated. When that happens that means that somebody loses their school. You can't voluntarily consolidate a couple of districts and keep those schools open. That is not happening. They're losing their schools. If you put 662 in place by virtue of the amendment, every school, every attendance center out there is protected from now into perpetuity. I submit to you that if you want to save the school as opposed to the district, that you pass this bill because the way the future will be if you agree with me as to what is realistic about our future, about our agricultural economy, then I think you must agree there is going to be a rapid voluntary consolidation pace and that that will necessarily mean, under our present system, the loss of a whole number of Class I schools. You can better protect them with this bill.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Goll, please.

SENATOR GOLL: Mr. President and members, there's been a lot of oratory this morning and the time is waning when decisions have to be made. But for a moment I'd like to share with you, to read into the record, portions of a letter, portions of a letter that I received last week from a lady in my district who lives in a county in my district where there is only one class school left. The rest have all been reorganized. This lady served on a reorganization committee in that county and I want to share with you for about a minute and a half what she said in this letter. "Centralization, being if for the purpose of education or otherwise, certainly needs to be considered on many levels. Studies show that in fact, costs, that is taxes, were not lowered but were raised. One might offset this with teacher credentials as those were generally of a higher quality. In your position as a decision-maker I suggest that you first determine the value of the change. Who benefits? Who doesn't? If the local people are willing to pay a higher