

SENATOR MARSH: The amendment to the amendment.

SENATOR PIRSCH: What is the amendment to the amendment? Oh, operative date. Oh, well, I understand everyone is really generally speaking to the bill. I guess instead of speaking to the amendment to the amendment I will concentrate on the amendment which is really, Senator Higgins, a much better proposal and one that you should vote for because the amendment was an agreement to reduce the amount from the original bill. And also as it's been pointed out by Senator Nelson, the small businessman doesn't pay this, the consumer does and that tax on that alcohol is a small cost compared to the devastation of the finances, the marriages, the children and the lives of those families in Nebraska who have a member of their family that consumes that liquor in excess and let alone the cost, the hundreds of thousands of dollars that programs across the State of Nebraska are financed by public funds to pay for that terrible devastation. And, Senator Beutler, you said you didn't want moderate drinkers to pay this tax. My goodness, you'd have the rest of the people in the State of Nebraska pay for it, those who do not drink, who do not participate except maybe as volunteers in alcoholic problems and they should be taxed and not those who drink the alcohol and sometimes abuse alcohol? Now I'd like to take a little history for the new senators in the group and maybe refresh the memory of some of the, do I dare say old senators in the group? Senator Martin Kahle and I introduced this bill two years ago and it was similar and we talked about what to raise the alcohol tax to, but it was a very moderate raise and it failed. And the reason it failed was because some said, wait a year, now this was in 1983, some said, wait a year, we're not quite ready for it and others said, there's a gentlemen's agreement that was made when these taxes were raised before. And, of course, I, not being a gentleman, I was not aware of it nor involved in it. But that agreement was that another raise would not be made for another four years and during those years inflation was rampant and literally reduced the actual percentage of tax collected on alcoholic beverages and meanwhile the service charges on alcoholism increased at a rapid rate. Well, we are now five years away from 1979...from 1980 and I am optimistic. This is a proposal whose time has come. The increases are fair and we have had the cooperation of the industries to reach that agreement and while some may think that it is suspect in some return, I guess that is politics. And while it is