

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, I don't know if we have the votes for this and I am not going to take a lot of time. As you can see, neither one of us are jumping up to offer it, but as I have listened to the debate, we earlier said or it was stated by the Appropriations Committee that it was important for us to protect the health and the education of our citizens. I equally feel that we need to protect the interest of natural resources. This funding would reinstate many of the cuts made in the areas of natural resources. I think that we have made substantial steps forward in regard to protecting the water, the soil, and the air in this state through passage of at least three bills that I can think of, offhand, today and I think it is important for us to recognize that we are not just talking in this particular case about water quantity or quality but also water quantity, and we are asking the Natural Resources District to do more with limited funds, and so rather than take a lot of time, I think all of us have made up our mind as far as what motions we are going to support and oppose. I would just urge the body to reinstate the cuts in this particular area as they apply to the natural resources which I think are both important, not only to those of us in the rural areas, but also to those in the urban areas as well.

PRESIDENT: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, I want to just commend Senator Johnson for the suggestion that we offer this motion, not because it will have any chance of success, because the die is cast. I think it is important, however, that we provide this body the opportunity to go on record because I don't know of anybody that has extolled the virtues of soil and water conservation more eloquently, more loudly, more vociferously than does this one. Nor do I know of any press in this state or any other state that places a higher priority on soil and water conservation than does the press of Nebraska. You have read more written words and heard more words over radio and television as to why we must protect the soil and water than probably any other single entity, unless it might be education, but I would suggest that in an area where you spend \$300 million, plus or minus, on certain phases of education, \$300 million a year on roads in one capacity or another, that a million or so spent on conservation of the soil and water is not an excessive amount. Certainly we ought to be able to spend one-third of 1 percent as much to conserve the soil and the water as we spend to cover it up with concrete. I know that