

is to discourage smoking. Perhaps we would have less dollars collected at 25 cents tax, and that would be to the benefit of the State of Nebraska. As he's talking about the numbers of smokers, let's remember the two-thirds of our population, yes, the two-thirds who are nonsmoking. They will be watching the action on this legislative floor this morning.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Schmit, please, then Senator Haberman.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I'd have to rise to oppose the Marsh amendment because I oppose the original proposal. I oppose the original proposal because I believe it is not correct that we continue to nit-pick around the peripheral areas of the budget in an attempt to resolve a problem which is more deep-seated than any of us are prone to admit. We stood on this floor last January, February and March when we discussed the very issue we are discussing today. At that time I said we were going to be short millions of dollars and we are. If we follow the present proposal, we are going to be short millions of dollars again in January. We are going to find that we continue to cut services, and going to continue to increase taxes and all of a sudden we live in a very nice, pristine state, all by ourselves, but no one is here to pay any tax, no one is here to provide any services. Major companies are going to be leaving. We are not going to be able to balance the budget of the State of Nebraska on the backs of the cigarette smokers. I don't smoke cigarettes. I can get along without cigars, as most of us can. But I just think that we have an incorrect philosophy if we think we are going to be able to bring into fiscal responsibility the financial problems of this state by a small increase or a substantial increase in the area of cigarette taxes. While I'm on my feet, I have to say I also oppose the amendment by Senator Hefner. You are going to have plenty of opportunity to listen to that, but I oppose that amendment. I think it is important to recognize that until we look at the entire issue that faces us we are not going to resolve the problem. We are not going to resolve the problem by tacking 4 million bucks into the revenue side from cigarette taxes or \$6 million or \$7 million. So, therefore, I would have to oppose this amendment and ask this Legislature to consider seriously the obligations and responsibilities we have to the entire State of Nebraska.