

April 9, 1979

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that cost day after day, month after month, year after year without some kind of corresponding reduction in cost or inputs concerning the basic cost of the generation of the electricity. We enact legislation here every day that causes the fixed cost of the utility to increase. We deal with minimum wages, we deal with employee benefits, we deal with the various rules and regulations concerning environmental improvement. We mildly and meekly pass on to the local utilities those recommendations of the federal government that increase the cost by the hundreds of millions of dollars and then we turn right around and we say that we do not want that utility to raise the price of their electricity beyond a certain point without having public input. Well, I wonder why we don't have public input on the cost of petroleum which is not publicly owned. It would be a tremendous kind of a public hearing, I can assure you. You could fill this Chamber and several others. We do not have public hearings regarding other costs of various sources of energy. I wonder and I fail to understand why do we zero in on electricity which is only one of those. Now I share Senator Fowler's concern of those individuals who cannot pay their electricity bill but I suggest to you that it is just as much a concern and a deep concern for many of my constituents who are forced to pay higher cost for oil and higher cost for propane for heating their homes. Electricity has become a very vital part of our economy. There is not much you can do without it, in some instances, but to think that you can just isolate one energy source and not address the rest of them is foolish. It is also kind of interesting that on this floor several weeks ago we failed to advance LB 571 which deals with an alternate source of energy. I believe that Senator Hoagland's bill is still resting in committee which deals with solar energy. Unless we develop alternate sources of energy, there is not going to be any way in the world you are going to hold down these energy costs. As I said the other day as long as you have the heat under the pressure cooker, the pressure is going to rise and somewhere you're going to have to have a safety valve. We have zeroed in and we have singled out one source of energy and we call it the ogre of the community and we require it to meet standards which no other energy supplier is required to meet. I have had rather rapidly escalating costs of electrical energy but they do not in any way compare with the cost that I have had to pay for diesel fuel and gasoline in the last ninety days. I have had fifteen and twenty percent increases in those costs. We have been promised further cost increases of comparable amounts in the next few months, and I fail to under-

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