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LB 457

stand what we can gain here except as Senator Murphy has pointed out to increase the very cost of the utility. We may reduce the federal deficit of the Post Office Department by the mailing out of these notices, and if that is the benefit, then that is about the only one I can see at the present time. We are going to get a fraction or of a minute particle of the percentage of public participation, and if response to public hearings is any, based upon past performances is any criteria, nobody is going to pay any attention to what the public says anyway.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have got one minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: The public comes to hearing after hearing after hearing before this Legislature and says let us alone, stay out of our way, stay out of our pocket, but time and time and time and again we continue to place upon the public burdens which they did not ask for. I don't think the bill is a bad bill. It is not as bad as some of those I have seen that have come out of the committee and I know Senator Simon has tried hard to do some good things but I wish he were working on some other sources of energy or all of them rather than just electricity because you are not going to solve the problem by placing the electric utility industry in a straight jacket and I am afraid that is what you are trying to do. I am opposed to the bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Clark.

SENATOR CLARK: Mr. President, members, I am more or less opposed to the bill but I would like to ask Senator Fowler a question if I could. How long would it be before they could raise the rates under this bill?

SENATOR FOWLER: Okay, the process indicates that notices to wholesale or retail customers must go out no earlier than ninety days or at least thirty days and then two meetings are required, regular meetings, and the amount of time that this would take would depend on whether those were monthly meetings, weekly meetings or whatever, but let's say they are monthly meetings and let's say they had sent the notice out at least thirty days, the minimum would be thirty days to the first meeting and then a month later would be the second meeting, so that would be sixty days. Now it could be longer, if they wanted to send the notice out earlier. If, as in the case of a city council, they meet weekly and the notice went out thirty days before, it would be thirty days to the first meeting, a week to the second, so it would be five weeks. I might point out that