

Senator Vickers and then Senator Chambers.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, the problem with the system we have of being able to speak around here is whenever you have a really witty remark to make, by the time you get up to speak, it has lost its punch, and I just want Senator Chambers to know that when he refers to myself and Senator DeCamp as being one and two, I have a strong hunch of one and two from the bottom, Senator DeCamp or Senator Chambers, and not from the top, and it is hard to say from day to day right here if you can even keep that position. I would like to also say that I guess I am a little sympathetic with what Senator Newell says in which you find yourself trapped into a position. I definitely did not want to be put into a position where I had to come out and vigorously oppose Omaha on -this kind of a basis. That is why I worked for a long while, many years, in fact, to try to work some kind of an equitable solution to the property tax situation and the sales and income tax situation which faces us today. More than two years ago I gave the Revenue Committee the framework of a bill which would have dealt with the issue. I said then and I have said it every year since that it is almost impossible to deal with a major tax change during a regular session of the Legislature. I have touched upon it in my opening remarks. Senator Newell has touched upon it. Senator Landis has touched upon it. Notwithstanding the merits of each individual piece of legislation, any grown person here knows that there are certain ties that are formed, certain alliances that are formed, and eventually legislation moves or does not move. I feel very good after Senator Higgins' speech. I think she has pointed out some issues which have been totally overlooked time after time after time. I know that Senator Newell says we have not protected the tax base of downtown Omaha. Well, one of the reasons is, Senator Newell, because you have got to encourage business to stay where it ought to have stayed. As a result, business has moved out. The packing industry was the backbone of Omaha for many years and now those are located in many small communities around the state. Along with the packing industry has gone many of those jobs that went along with it, along with the subsequent sales that would have been attributed to the people that brought livestock into Omaha. You talk about what you are trying to do to rebuild downtown Omaha. I would suggest you take a look at the state tax dollars over the past few years that have been funneled into Omaha for a variety of projects and it certainly looks like your own downtown urban renewal area benefited the State of Nebraska. I have not opposed those projects.