

the industry in my area because we don't have any oil producing folk in residential Omaha but I also recognize that a lot of that tax will be born by all of us in our oil and gas prices but I am prepared to pay the tax. I am prepared to pay the price because I think it is only right that I do the very best that I can today to make certain that our children have a bountiful tomorrow and I think it is only fit and proper that we, as a Legislature, do everything we can on our own power to lessen our reliance on foreign oil, frankly, to lessen our reliance on just a handful of corporations that really control our energy futures. And to the extent that we promote solar, to the extent that we promote building efficiencies, to the extent that we allow our public schools to become modernized, so incidentally, Senator Kahle, they don't have all their lights on one switch but they have lots of different switches for all the different lights and the other things, we are helping to create a better tomorrow and it takes some vision for us to do this. It takes some willingness for us to say, "We are willing as consumers to pay a higher price today so that our children can do better tomorrow." And I think LB 257 as amended or with the amendments, with the amendments, will be another important and large step for us for the future and I wholeheartedly support the amendments.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and colleagues, I rise to oppose the amendment to 257 and the reason I oppose it is because I think we have too doggone many regulations already. And talk about conserving energy, I think that we have, I think the people in Nebraska are starting to conserve energy and I think that we need less government regulations instead of more. I think that if the government would get out of the energy business, private enterprise would take over and they would see that we would have plenty of energy at reasonable prices. Last year the Department of Energy of our federal government had a budget of ten billion dollars, ten billion dollars. Do you know that that is more profit than all the big oil interests earned in one year and yet, and yet, they did not produce one more gallon of oil. It still had to come from the private enterprise system and so, therefore, I say, "Let's let the people, let's let private business go ahead and find our oil for us and they will." And look at our own State Energy Office, I don't know how many employees they have over there. I would be willing to say they have probably got fifty to sixty employees that started from just several employees. Now I don't know what their budget is. I understand that last year they couldn't even