

just three counties, Dundy, Hitchcock and Red Willow. These rigs employ approximately sixty people most of who live in Nebraska. In addition, we have one hundred and seventeen thousand five hundred and sixty-six acres of leases. Now if we put this tax on, and it says right here, "Nebraska has a tremendous future in oil exploration. It has been in the past an attractive state in which to operate. The proposed increase in severance tax will be detrimental and will act in a negative fashion towards future exploration." What is the man telling us? That in three counties we stand to lose sixty employees, three out of how many counties. I have another letter, this firm operates twenty-four oil wells in one county and they average 4.9 barrels of oil a day. The states that Senator Cullan was talking about, their average is a lot higher than 4.9 barrels a day. If you tax these people more, they are not going to pump these wells. They are not going to drill these wells and we are going to lose an industry. We are going to lose employees. So I say to you, let's find some other method instead of this special type of taxation and legislation. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I appreciate the enthusiasm with which some of my colleagues are addressing the energy problem. I guess I have to take some of the chastisement from Senator Wesely that none of us care about the energy situation. I think I see Senator Carsten smile a little bit over there because a number of years ago Senator Carsten remembers when we began to work on energy and we stood on this floor and we said we had better be doing something about energy because if we didn't the day would come when the finite source of petroleum would run out. At that time this Legislature was considered to be ridiculous and foolish. We were considered, and I well remember, Senator Wesely, the testimony before the Revenue Committee, Senator Cal, I think you remember, when they said that there were billions of barrels of petroleum in reserve. There would never be a shortage and that it could never run out and we were ridiculous to talk about trying to do something about it but the facts was this Legislature took some steps and did some things that proved to be prophetic. It is interesting also, colleagues of mine, that at this time and date we have still not taken the most advantageous position we could take and utilize the source of energy which is renewable and available to us all right here in Nebraska if we were to convert grain to alcohol. And so that is history. Now I know that there are many good arguments in support of the bill and I would like to be able