

May 4, 1981

LB 561, 527

the budget is no doubt tight. In fact, it may be tighter than we believe it to be at this present time. That is one reason why I introduced LB 527 which I believe could have been used to have increased the cigarette tax and may have provided some funds for this kind of a project. I would like to call your attention and I don't often do this to the editorial page of the World Herald today, but the editorial page of the World Herald comments about the necessity of soil conservation. It points out in rather plain terms that if farmers aren't going to do this soil conservation work then maybe government is going to have to step in and do it itself. Now I haven't been able to figure out how government is going to do this when a body such as Nebraska which is as oriented toward soil and water conservation as we are, out of the billion dollars plus we spend, find it difficult to make a contribution of about a half a mill to the water development fund. I am not faulting Senator Warner or the Budget Committee. I recognize their problem is one of trying to work within existing revenues and it is a tough one. As I have said for a number of years and I have said it time after time that if you want to stand on the floor here and plead and bleed for soil conservation and water conservation and when I have been told time and time again that the water and the land belong to all of us and I have here before me something which causes me some embarrassment put out by the Catholic Church and it says lands benefits are everyone's. It should be distributed equitably and some other things. I think if you believe some of that, then you have to believe that we all make some kind of a contribution. I don't think that a contribution of about two and a half dollars per capita is exactly busting the bank for soil and water conservation when we look at some of the other measures for which we vote on this floor desirable as they are. I think Senator Kremer has pared the thing down to the bone. Hopefully even at this late date the Public Works Committee might put 527 on the floor and we could then adjust the cigarette tax and try to bring some revenue in because I believe we are going to need it and I think that it is going to be...Senator Higgins, I am going to leave off the cigars of course, but I think that we are going to have to do something like that to bring in enough revenue to take care of those needs which we consider to be legitimate. I know the budget is fine tuned and I have a few questions I will ask later on on 561 but there may be some places in there where we could save that million dollars if we had to and I will ask those questions later. At this time I would ask you to support the Kremer amendment as amended.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vard Johnson.