

May 6, 1981

LB 146

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, this is something a little different for me to stand up here and to ask that you increase a mill levy or that you increase some taxes. However, I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't think that the need was there. Now I would like to give you some examples of the need. In my control area there are three counties. There are 350,000 acres of irrigated land. They have set a limit on the number of acre feet a farmer can use to 22 inches per year or 66 inches a total of three years. Now there are 2,775 wells in these three counties and they all have meters. There is a meter being passed around this floor now so you can see what they look like. Now all of these meters have to be checked each year to see if they are accurate. All of these meters have to be checked each year, they have to be read to see if the farmer is staying within his allotment. Now that is 2,775 meters over three counties and over 350,000 acres. We told these people, the people in the area said we want controls. They told this board they wanted meters, they wanted controls, they wanted people to follow the law that the board set up, and quite frankly they can't do it on the money that they have now. Another reason they can't do it is that at the present time there are two lawsuits going on, two lawsuits. One of the lawsuits is suing the board and each individual member. These have to be defended by the Upper Republican NRD. What is decided in these lawsuits will affect every NRD in the State of Nebraska. The other two NRDs that are in control areas are sitting back and they do not have any of these expenses because quite frankly they are not being sued. So how can these people do their job if they don't have the money. So they are asking for a quarter of a cent increase. What they going to spend the money for? They are going to spend \$42,000 for three technicians. Now that is seven...their legal fees are going to be \$15,000. Auto expense is \$6,000. Now remember we have got 350,000 acres to cover in three counties. Employees, Board of Directors expense per diem is \$4,500. Legal notices is \$2,000. Postage and office supplies is \$4,000, and being as they have so many meters, they are going to need a new pickup and this is \$8,000. So that comes to \$84,000 that they need. They are taking in \$44,000 so they are going in the hole \$44,000 and how can they do their job. The board voted eleven zip, eleven to nothing to support this increase. This board is elected by the people in the area, and if the people in the area want to raise Old Ned with me or with the board, that is fine but I am convinced they need the money. They can't operate without it. It is just for the three control areas that the increase goes on, not every NRD in the county. So if these people are to do the job that the Legislature has

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