

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, the bill has been discussed many times and discussed at length. I would just like to emphasize once again. There have been some arguments advanced on the floor that this bill, because a certain amount of money has been expended, a certain amount of money that was delivered from the Natural Resource Districts, a certain amount of money that was almost 900 thousand dollars that was contributed from the water development fund, that because this money has been invested there is an implication that it may not be utilized to the best possible advantage if LB 243 becomes law. I would just like to point out that if this is true that there is about a million two hundred thousand dollars of total taxpayer dollars invested in a recreation area in Kimball County which has, I believe, a population of about five thousand people. It is a county which has, as nearly as I can tell, suffered one of the largest percentage of population drops of any county in the state. It is a county which does not have a great demand for recreational facilities and in which no dearth of recreational facilities exist. If you were to take this one million two hundred thousand dollars for example, and spend it in eastern Nebraska you could construct three or four swimming pools in metropolitan Omaha or a city of the primary class such as Lincoln with far more justification than you could expend that money in western Nebraska. I wonder how many of the people who are supporting this bill would stand on this floor as I promised to do if a Natural Resource District is joining an urban area comes before this body after my bill becomes law and requests approval of this body to spend that kind of money for a recreation area strictly for the benefit of urban Nebraska, I wonder how many of them will stand there and support that idea, that concept and that expenditure of funds. I have said for a long period of time and I recognize the value of recreation, my bill provides that recreation be considered as one of the benefits but it provides also that at least 25% of the benefits must be from some other category. Someone has asked me how will you ever determine that so we answered that. We said we will let the Natural Resource District make that determination. There have been implications and statements that no one can determine just how much of the benefits are recreational. Let me point out also that the federal government has criteria and, in fact, they do not encourage the expenditure of federal funds for a project where the recreation benefits exceed 50%. No one has ever said that it is impossible to determine those benefits from the standpoint of the federal government. And you can stand here today as you have done before and argue that this is a special interest bill. I say it is a special interest bill. It is a special interest bill of every single citizen of the State of