

that this does not necessarily say that Highway 81 shall be the highway which shall be improved. It may well be Highway 77 or any other highway. It could be 30, it could be any of those highways. I think what we are saying is that there needs to be additional emphasis placed upon highway improvement in the State of Nebraska. We are seeing railroad abandonments which are going to throw additional cost upon the highway system. There is no other way you are going to handle it. Some of these spurs are abandoned. The branch lines are abandoned. You're going to throw additional loads upon the highway system. Regardless of how you vote on LB 233 I think we should...we have performed a service by pointing out that there is a deficiency in the funds available for road construction, that we have not met those responsibilities, that there are additional costs that are going to be incurred day after day and Senator Higgins has pointed out some of the very hidden cost. But let me point out some costs that you don't even think about. A number of years ago and I've been advocating a bridge across the Platte River at Bellwood for a number of years, what was not possible with thirteen cent diesel fuel becomes a reality when diesel fuel hits a dollar and a quarter a gallon. What was not possible with twenty-nine cent gasoline becomes a reality with dollar thirty-five gasoline. We have to look at distances and highways in a different light now than we did ten years ago. Also in Butler County for example, a county which has a large number of bridges, many bridges which have been in place for fifty, sixty, seventy years, many bridges which have been condemned, the county board because of a state law must inspect those bridges annually and they must close roads because of inadequate bridges. And so what happens when Schmit or Warner or Kahle decides to head for town with a load of corn? Instead of taking the most direct route we have to drive around.

SPEAKER MARVEL: You have one minute left.

SENATOR SCHMIT: And that's costly also. Now it is not a direct cost to the state but it certainly is a cost to all of us. In the long run the people pay and so I think that I don't entirely disagree with Senator Kahle, Senator Warner, Vickers, Cullan. What I do agree with on their part of their discussion is this. There needs to be some renewed emphasis upon highway construction that needs to be faced right now and the sooner we do it the better and I think in that context the bill we are talking about here justifies consideration. It is not going to be costing us a dime unless the Governor should agree. Now if you think the sun is going to come up in the west tomorrow morning, then you think the Governor is going to agree. He's not going to agree. We know that but I think he needs to know the feeling of this Legislature relative to highways. We owe that to him and certainly I'm sure he would appreciate the voice from this