

SENATOR SCHMIT: Why don't you press your light and you can respond on that a little bit later on.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: All right, I will.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you. Reference has been made here time and time and again that these are not general tax fund dollars and I concur. I want to point out that the Appropriations Committee also knows that the state contract with Blue Cross and Blue Shield this year was increased by 33 percent. Now that is an appropriation to cover medical cost. If those costs are legitimate and are necessary, none of us have any complaint with them, but anytime that we provide duplication of services, anytime that we do not make maximum effort to avoid duplication, to utilize existing equipment, existing personnel and existing opportunities for cooperation, we increase the cost of health care services. Ladies and gentlemen, I've said it on the floor before and you're going to hear it again and again and again, we are marching down the road to the point where there will be no alternative except some kind of national health insurance. A substantially increased percentage of the population of the state today does not have health care insurance which then provides another problem for hospitals because they cannot possibly take care of those people on an indigent basis and they can't turn them away either. I want to point out that the Blue Cross and the other insurance companies are simply trying to stay ahead of the power curve. They can't do it because those cost increases, partly due to the very sophisticated surgery procedures we have today and other improved medical techniques, are increasing substantially faster than rates can increase. But one of these days...

PRESIDENT: Excuse me, Senator Schmit. (Gavel.) Let's hold it down so we can hear it. What Senator Schmit is saying is very interesting.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm glad you find it that way, Mr. President. I hope someone else might. I do not want to...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...be a dog in the manger on this project, but I'm telling you, ladies and gentlemen, you ought to all have egg