

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Yes, Mr. President, I certainly would. We are beginning down the path that I felt we would eventually head down, and I guess I want people to be aware of what we are doing here today. I just was hit by one of the lobbyists in the Rotunda saying how can you not support the Hall amendment. We have heard all about the three-tier structure. The fact is that the three-tier structure applies to spirits, to beer, and to wine, and I'd suggest to the lobbyist that what we are doing today with Senator Hall's amendment is basically heading us down the direction that Senator Schmit I think clearly pointed it out, this is the first crack in the three-tier system. It only applies to spirits, but I can see the day when we will eventually destroy the entire three-tier structure for all segments of alcohol, including spirits, wine, and beer. Senator Warner's amendment now opens that gap just a little bit wider, and all that would now remain under the three-tier structure would be beer. Everything else would be sort of out on its own. I guess I see a system that has been working fairly well. It is up to this body whether they want to take that system and restructure it somewhat. I don't know what deals have been cut with various people. I was told that a deal had been cut that we wouldn't touch wine and beer. Well, that may have been a deal that somebody cut with somebody else but they didn't cut it with me, and I guess I am not going to support the Warner amendment on the basis that I think the three-tier structure has worked well. It has worked well in the rural areas of the state. We don't seem to have a significant problem. There might be some cheating going on, as Senator Hall has suggested, but I don't know of anyone that is going to pick up and drive to Omaha to buy one bottle of whatever spirit because he ran out of it. Somehow I think that there are better business people out there than that that recognize the need that they have, and I am sure will stock the necessary quantities of certain spirits in order to service his or her bar. I guess the Warner amendment just accentuates what I thought we were probably going to eventually get to, which is the destruction of the entire three-tier structure, and I guess at this particular point I don't want to do that. That is my personal opinion. Everybody else has their own opinion, and I am sure we will hear everyone's opinion on this, but I think it is the wrong direction to head, and I would just highlight to the committee or to this body that today is a...we may be setting some historical precedent on this whole structure, and I see, if this is tacked on and this bill is passed, that you may well see the end of the three-tier structure in the state, and maybe that is