

very ably chaired by Senator Schmit can address this in an intelligent and rational manner. We have had the contacts with all the people who have been interested in this particular aspect of the bill and how they are going to be compensated. We have talked to the public in many, many meetings and have personal expertise that has been derived from all of that information that all of our hearings have provided us. And I would urge you to defeat this particular amendment and leave it with the committee who has had the experience with the issue. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, this is a little sensitive because I do not want to appear to be critical of my fellow committee member, Senator Morrissey. He has every right to propose such an amendment, but I must just touch briefly upon some of the concerns that I have. There was a suggestion prior to the introduction of LB 763 that the bill would not receive a fair public hearing, obviously because someone felt that the chairman of the committee might not be fair in handling of the issue. After the committee hearing was held, one person after another came forward and expressed their total satisfaction with the conduct of the hearing. They didn't necessarily agree with the conclusions but they were most emphatic in the fact that the hearing had been conducted fairly, impartially, with courtesy extended to all individuals who wished to testify. I think that if there is any reason why the integrity of the committee ought to be challenged, that should have been dispelled long ago. It is justifiably the responsibility of the Revenue Committee, pardon me, of the Natural Resources Committee. It ought to be handled that way and it ought not to be disseminated just because of a personal situation. I hope that is not why the issue was addressed in this manner. I have every...I have high respect for Senator Morrissey but I think the best way to address issues sometimes is to do it out in the open, and I am doing it that way. I want to point out also that no individual has a lock on the chairmanship of a committee, and time has required and has sometimes caused the turnover of committee chairmen and, therefore, all the more reason why the responsibility should rest with the committee, not with the individuals. All too often we have a tendency on this floor, and I am guilty of it myself from time to time, to associate an individual with a committee and confuse the two responsibilities. I should not do that and we should not do