

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, as you know, the committee amendments become the bill and we...hopefully we'll be able to dissolve some of the questions that have been raised as we...

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Schmit, excuse me. (Gavel.) Thank you.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...as we debated these amendments. Again, I want to alert you that this is not a simple piece of legislation. It is not in finite form and it is not totally satisfactory to a great many individuals, both in and out of the industry and on and off this floor, and, therefore, I want to ask you again that if this bill advances that you read it carefully, that you take it back home to your own people and you discuss it with them and discuss some of the issues that were raised here by Senator Morrissey and Senator Owen Elmer, Senator Wesely and many others, Senator Smith, because the bill is a very critical bill to the industry and although it is critical to the industry today, whether or not it becomes law may make it very critical to all of us in the weeks and months and years to come. There are a number of variables here as we have pointed out. We do not know what the total cost will be of replacing some of these tanks. We do not know and we hope that we do not ever find excessive contamination and I know, as has been pointed out by Senator Hefner, many station operators are trying now to replace tanks and are replacing them in a new manner which we hope will be more responsible at tremendous cost to the operator. We hope that those costs of replacing those tanks are not so prohibitive that many small communities do not have the services of a local facility available to them. There was a time when a gas station was on every corner in some of these small towns, and as I drive through those communities today and see the area paved over I can't help but wonder whether or not those tanks were removed, if they were removed, was there any examination for contamination? If they were not removed, were they empty or have they, in fact, still the potential for creating havoc with the water supply? I want to emphasize again as I have mentioned on this floor before, that we are not going to clean the environment up at no expense and it would be very easy to say, well, it's the station operators' responsibility, go ahead and stick him for it, but to the extent that we all rely upon them, we probably all have to be responsible to a certain extent for the cleanup. There's going to be a lot of problems about this bill. In the long run, let me tell you that