

November 17, 1989

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, I will not take a lot of time. I believe the issue has been debated considerably. You have heard the point of view of Senator Chambers and others. I think one of the points of view which is prevalent here, which no one disagrees upon, is the fact that the Legislature wants very much to be involved in the confirmation process. We do not want to simply rubber stamp those individuals who are appointed. Number two, there is another factor here which I believe is important. Of all the appointees that came before the Natural Resources Committee, not one person from the public appeared in support of or in opposition to any of the appointees. There simply wasn't time for the public to become informed as to the appointments. Now, if you're going to use the process, then there has to be sufficient time. And maybe Senator Chambers was correct relative to the special session. This can be changed by statutes, as Senator Warner has pointed out. We can change that process next time. And, if there happens to be a disagreement as to whether or not these individuals are confirmed, in the case of both the Natural Resources Committee and the Education Committee, and that's the only area of limbo, no great disservice is going to happen if they are automatically confirmed, I don't suppose. None of them seem to me to be ulterior, secretive, subversive or anything of that nature. We are trying to make the process work in the manner in which it was intended to work. As Senator Warner and Senator Barrett have both indicated, there may be some indications that we need to change the process. If so, then I would certainly be helpful in that effort. At this time what we have recommended appears to be the responsible course of action. I believe that no one can find fault with this body wanting to take a responsible course. I think that the committee has acted in the best interests of the public and also in the best interests of the appointees. I simply certainly do not want to meet and reject all of these appointees, because it gives, as I said, a negative connotation. And, in any case, as Senator Chambers has pointed out, we can't do that, according to his philosophy. If we can't do that, according to the Attorney General's philosophy, they are automatically appointed. It's bad enough, I shouldn't say bad enough, it is humbling enough that this Legislature is submissive to the role of the Governor. Why should we further submit ourselves to the opinion of the Attorney General? I think that we have embarked upon a responsible course. I would ask you to vote affirmatively in favor of this motion.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Ashford, please.