

it, but also deals with the water rights issues. And I think to give up now sends a totally wrong message. I feel quite strong about this. I know Senator Schmit wants to save money. If I thought there was a chance of an early proposal being accepted by Wyoming, and doing something, then I think we could justify doing that, but it isn't. Irrigation is a \$14 million gross state product annually from this area. It is not to be taken lightly and it is not taken lightly in that area, and I just think if there is a temptation on the part of some of you to say, well, let's give up at this time and reduce the amount, we will be making a mistake. I think we ought to be thinking more of our children and grandchildren in this instance than anything else. What will western Nebraska be without this water? And I think that ought to be a key question, not only in the water, itself, but the precedent it may set if we lose on this water rights issue. I strongly urge you to oppose Senator Schmit's amendment in this form, too.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Madam President. I have hesitated to speak on this in light of Senator Schmit's very strongly held views, but I think the body does need to very carefully consider that this is no time to hesitate or to send the wrong signal in this process. If we do not show, as a state, that we are committed to protecting our water rights, then the only signal that we can be giving to others who would impair our rights to water is that they may take them and we will simply roll over. I agree that mediation is oftentimes the best course, but when you are mediating or when you are negotiating, it does not benefit you in any respect to send signals of weakness or hesitancy, and I consider the Schmit amendment to be such a signal and will oppose it.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Does anyone else wish to speak to this amendment? Seeing none, do you have closing, Senator?

SENATOR SCHMIT: Yes, Mr. President, a few remarks relative to my seatmate Senator Moore's remarks. First of all, I appreciate the advice from my good friend. He is a very good legislator, he is very dedicated, and very devoted to his work. I do not appreciate, Senator Moore, the comments that I snipe at the committee. Sniping is something which is done behind people's