

of the nation. Actually, we were far ahead of many other states in the nation. It's kind of ironic that at the time that we did it, we probably didn't...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...know the benefits of what we were doing. This, again, is just one more instance of where we will allow existing institutions, Norwest Bank of Omaha, Norwest Bank of Lincoln, if they so choose, to merge, or Norwest Bank of Grand Island, or Fremont...not Fremont, I guess, Norfolk, I believe Kearney, maybe some other banks to merge and still retain their right that they have now as an independently chartered bank to have six branches within this city. I believe it is a fair bill. I believe that the Norwest system has functioned as a good member of the banking community, as a reliable provider of credit to the area in which they serve, both locally and otherwise across the state. And I believe that this bill, as amended, will increase that ability of Norwest Bank to service their customers, and I would ask you to...

PRESIDENT MOUL PRESIDING

PRESIDENT MOUL: Time.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...adopt the amendment and to advance the bill. Pardon me.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Schmit. Senator Landis, followed by Senator Crosby.

SENATOR LANDIS: Madam President, members of the Legislature, I do agree with that part of Senator Schmit's speech in which he said this didn't take a long time. The votes are here or they aren't, and then we can proceed to the matter of voting on the issue. Since last we talked, I should tell you that the Banking Committee has asked for an interim study on the topic of bank structure, and said this is the kind of thing our committee ought to study, bring the parties together over the summertime and see what we can do. That interim study is filed, it's available, and it provides us the basis with which to study the terms of LB 470 as it was originally drafted, as it's currently drafted, or any of the other branching or bank structure issues that we should discuss. That's basically the place at which I then, I think, stop agreeing with Senator Schmit. Senator