

SENATOR SCHMIT: Well, Mr. President and members, I have not spoken on this issue and I really did not intend to speak on it because I think Senator Wickersham, and Lamb and others, "Cap" Dierks, have outlined many of the good reasons why this line ought to be maintained intact and to serve the State of Nebraska. And I say the State of Nebraska because it reminds me substantially of some of the arguments we have for why we need a good highway system that connects Hyannis and Chadron and Scottsbluff to eastern Nebraska, why we need a good telephone system that connects the east to the west. Not just because people from the west might want to come to Lincoln or that they might want to call us or communicate with us in some other manner, but so that those of us who are in this part of the state can also communicate with the west. I've probably traveled over the State of Nebraska in one way or another more than any other person in this room. I have looked down upon the state thousands and thousands of times, and I have done so many times in just recent weeks and months. And it always amazes me when I take people with me and, as they travel through the part of the area that is served by this line, how impressed they are with the beauty of the area, with the size, the dimensions, and the general economic of opportunities that are out there. To some people, it looks like just grass and sky and a few cattle. But to those who know it well as Senator Dierks and all of those men and women who represent the northern tier of Nebraska, I would say from Sioux City clear on out to Chadron down to Scottsbluff and back up to central Nebraska, we know it as a very productive area. We know that Nebraska is not industry and booming insurance companies and that sort of thing, although it is very important. I have always said that Nebraska, and the business in Nebraska are commodities and livestock, and it is from this area that those qualities and quantities and products emanate. And certainly, day after day after day, when you recognize the productivity of that area, recognize the importance of maintaining that railroad line, I am always unhappy when I see where a line has been removed from an area, and as you travel over that area today, you recognize that the railroad serves that area in a very unique manner. And I do not criticize the railroads for investing their resources on those mainlines and concentrate their service on those mainlines. But that does not mean, as has been pointed out by Senator Wickersham, Lamb and Morrissey, that the area could not well be served by some sort of combination of investment procedures as we have provided here. A few years ago, the State of South Dakota, under Governor Janklow's leadership, bought a railroad.