

seeding alfalfa in this area could also contaminate the groundwater because it places nitrogen into the soil, and therefore does a desirable farm practice become one which has to be taxed because of the undesirable side effects. What about the feedlots, same area, which concentrate animal waste and therefore add to the nitrate supplies? What about the lagoons in the Platte Valley? The lagoon at Bellwood has overflowed from time to time in the spring of the year when the water table rises. Is it possible that the lagoon, at the Village of Bellwood, contributes to the nitrate in the groundwater? Is it possible that the nitrates placed upon the lawns in the City of Lincoln and Omaha, all the various cities, also are a contributing factor, and because of the high concentration of that application of nitrogen may, in fact, be a greater contaminate than we want to ascribe. How about the fertilizers from golf courses and many other areas which are kept in pristine condition, at rates of application much higher than those which we use on the farm. Many, many questions remain to be answered, and the responsibility for the cleanup is, of course, going to be difficult to determine. This is the reason why I opposed the constitutional amendment which allowed farmland to be appraised at less or more than actual value for the purposes of taxation. It would be extremely easy for me to understand why a future Legislature could justify taxing farmland at twice its actual value if the water supply of Lincoln or Omaha were threatened because of nitrates. It would be totally justifiable for an urban senator to stand on this floor and say the farmers caused the problem, the way to minimize it is to tax farmland that is fertilized excessively or is irrigated and therefore discourage such contamination. That is, in effect, what we are doing here in a microcosm of the State of Nebraska. So I think the committee's effort was probably along the right course. I think Senator Johnson and those individuals who propose this amendment chose to spread the cost over the entire district, and...

PRESIDENT MOUL: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...maybe in that way, Senator Beutler, the additional costs might educate the entire district to the problem that exists, and might help us all to minimize those practices which, in fact, could be contributing to further contamination. I'm going to oppose Senator Beutler's amendment, but I want to call all your attention to it because it does reflect a point of view which is becoming more and more