

January 4, 1995

next election is that of the Chair of the Natural Resources Committee. The floor is open for nominations. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam President, I wish to nominate myself. Members of the Legislature, let me begin by saying how proud I am of the current Natural Resources Committee. There is no doubt in my mind but that it's the most productive Natural Resources Committee that sat in this Legislature since Senator Kremer originally set up the Natural Resource District system. A great many pieces of very substantial legislation were originated and/or fashioned by the committee and passed without controversy by this Legislature, and the lives of Nebraskans have been enriched by that committee. I would like to claim that the productivity of the committee is mainly due to my leadership, but we all know that it's the character and the will of the individual members of the committee that makes the difference. And I wish to thank them all for their efforts and I thank Senator Bromm and Senator Elmer no less than the others. My handling of the committee, I think the committee would agree, has been fair and professional. We have, in good faith, assisted all of those who have come before us to develop the best possible bills in a timely manner. We have worked out compromises in committee so that floor amendments and floor discussions and floor fights on Natural Resources Committee bills have been avoided. We saw that absolutely every bill of consequence was prioritized either by the individual senator or by the committee or by the Speaker. Over all, I believe that the quality and the quantity of the production of the Natural Resources Committee has been at the very highest level. But the normal tasks, the normal tests to be applied to a chairman asking for another term are, I believe, not the issue today. Ill winds blow here and there helter-skelter in the countryside. Strong gusts flame, fanned by the heavy breath of manipulation and fueled with the fears of populations in transition. Nebraskans first focused on water, circulate petitions to senators saying, Chris Beutler should not be Chair of the Natural Resources Committee. Chris Beutler pushes too hard. Chris Beutler suggests changes. Chris Beutler thinks things cannot go on as they have. But I earnestly urge you to reflect, those with a good heart and inquisitive spirit ought not to be discouraged. Those who point the way to a resolution of competing values ought not to be devalued. Those who suggest a broadening of perspectives ought not to be blinded. And those who ask the hard questions ought not to be silenced because when you have quieted all of these, you have murdered leadership, you