

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

February 8, 2000 LB 900

difference is this, and it's a big one, but the difference is the Environmental Council in the Department of...in DEQ, is appointed by the Governor. The Natural Resources Commission is, to my knowledge, a kind of anomaly in state government in that it has rule and reg-making authority, but it's not appointed by the Governor, and they're not elected. They are chosen by an arcane caucus system, which I want to discuss in more length later. So that would be another difference between, even if you did move them over into the Department of Water Resources, that would be another difference between them and the Environmental Council. They are a more self-perpetuating group and not appointed by the Governor. So that's what I wanted to ask you to think about this morning, why not take one, little, additional step...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD PRESIDING

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...and create a single agency, a true merger, a single agency with a subagency commission, which still retains its powers. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Schrock, on the Beutler amendment to LB 900.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature, this may very well be a good idea, but I think the Governor and the two agency directors and the people involved with this legislation envision taking this one step at a time. I happen to know a little history about the Natural Resources Commission, Senator Beutler. There are 13 members that represent each watershed in the state of Nebraska. For example, one I'm close to is the...there is the Upper Republican, the Middle Republican, the Lower Republican NRDs, and a portion of the Tri-Basin NRD. Those three NRDs caucus and elect or appoint, and every NRD or basin seems to have a different method. And they appoint or elect someone to the Natural Resources Commission. I think in the case of the...there's the lower Blue or the Lower Big Blue and the Upper Big Blue. I believe they could do it on an alternating basis, but the people appointed to the commission are people who have been elected to