

***By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor***

Nebraska Sen. Ben Nelson voted with the majority in approving last week's Stimulus Bill after the measure was finalized.

More appropriately, it should be called a Spending Bill.

Nelson was on TV a lot as he espoused the merits of the bill and the bipartisan efforts it took to come to an agreement to make one bill out of the House and Senate versions. He seemed to back off from the "bipartisan" word, though, as there was no Republican support in the House and only three Senate GOP members voted with the majority.

□ The bill became law Tuesday, as President Barack Obama flew to Denver to sign it. Now, we'll see what effect it has.

□ I'll have to give Obama credit, because he is putting his entire presidency out on a limb with this package. He even said himself a few days back that if it doesn't work, he'll be out in four years.

□ That's probably where Nelson will be, too. People in Nebraska won't forget that he voted for this package.

It's supposed to "stimulate" the economy, by creating "or saving" 3.5 million jobs. While some of the spending in it will likely produce jobs, I'm anxious to see how many of those are government jobs versus ones created in the private section.

We all know that small businesses and firms like those in Imperial are the ones that create most jobs in this country, and create real economic growth.

Mostly government jobs are what this bill creates.

Yes, there is also some funding for things like K-12 schools, but even our superintendent believes the rural areas out here won't see much of that money.

Sen. Nelson said in a news release from his office, "Nebraska K-12 school districts will receive about \$236 million to prevent cutbacks, teacher layoffs, to modernize schools and for other purposes."

We'll see how much of it funnels out this way. No wonder Nelson said in that same news release that the bill has the support of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce.

If job creation is the real reason for this package, then why not put it more in the form of tax breaks to small companies and those of us who are working?

Less payroll taxes not only put more money in your pocket each pay period, but also relieves your employer from some of the money they put in to match what the employee pays.

This bill didn't do enough in those areas.

Some estimates say workers will see about \$13 a week more thanks to this package. That will be helpful, but it could have been a lot more. But, Congress decided to include a bunch of pet projects in the bill instead.

We all hope the economy gets back on its feet. Time will tell how this Spending Bill will help.

□ On one other note, our other U.S. Senator Mike Johanns voted against it.