

February 28, 1975

SENATOR MARVEL: I'm thinking, I'm trying to. Yes sir, and I'm trying to answer honestly. I can't give you a specific figure that the railroads are involved. This would specifically have to do with the relocation these tracks from the middle of the city to the county. The city would loose a few thousand dollars in property tax but the county would pick it up. Therefore, the railroads would be involved in the cost of the rebuilding of bids as I understand. That's the best answer I can give you at the moment.

SPEAKER: Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: My understanding of the way this works and I may not be totally accurate, is that there is a mill levy that is provided for and there are federal funds, but I'm not sure that the railroads really have to put any money into the construction of the new tracks and I think they also get reimbursed if the county choose to purchase the old tracks. So at least the way I see it, work at least in Lancaster County, is that the railroad gets new tracks gets paid off for the old tracks, it all comes out of county tax funds. I can't be one hundred percent accurate but that is my understanding. I don't know if Senator Barnett who brought in the bill to begin with could answer that question but my feeling is that the railroads are not expected to put any money in but in fact get money out which might provide a little profit for them.

SPEAKER: The chair recognizes Frank Lewis.

SENATOR LEWIS: Mr. chairman, I just have a question of information. Under the provisions of this act Senator Marvel, is this establishing a new mill levy taxing district like the NRD? Do they have any taxing authority.

SENATOR MARVEL: This is what I'm looking for. I see no evidence of this but if you want to hold this up and allow me to check it, I'll be glad to do it by the first of the week. I can't honestly say that there is a mill levy involved. Senator Barnett may be able to help out in this.

SENATOR BARNETT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, in answer to your question, if this is copied after the Lincoln or Lancaster County legislation, yes, there is a taxing district set up. In Lincoln it's called the Lincoln Railroad Transportation Safety District and it allows up to one mill for the purpose of the removal, replacement of trackage that goes through a city or the signalizing of traffic around a city, it makes quarters for the trains to come in and go around the city and not hold up traffic or cause creation or problems within the city. If it's like our bill, and I understand Senator Marvel did copy it accurately, then it would allow and it's permissive legislation, it's not mandatory legislation for anybody. Your amendment, Senator Marvel, does not make it mandatory it's just strictly permissive, allowing other cities to do the same thing that Lincoln is working on. It's a fifteen year program that we've come out with, I think we are in about the third year of it. We will start removing trackage, as I understand it, south of Lincoln to eliminate one of the big train automotive problem areas within two or three months. I understand there is now money available to do this. I hope that clears it up a little because it is a permissive thing.

SENATOR MARVEL: May I direct a question to Senator Fowler? Do you want me to hold the bill up until Monday to get a direct answer to you?

SENATOR FOWLER: Yes, I would appreciate knowing what the railroads contribute to the project.

SENATOR MARVEL: Mr. President, can I ask that the bill be passed over and retain its position or does it have to go clear down to the bottom?