

April 6, 1983

LB 64

number one as Senator Landis has called it to LB 64.

SENATOR CHRONISTER: Senator Fenger.

SENATOR FENGER: Thank you, Mr. President. Not serving on either Education or Banking Committee I have no knowledge of any deals but in view of the subject under question, it strikes me rather ridiculous that we are not willing to admit that perhaps there are areas of expertise in this field of energy and weatherization other than administrative services. And I think it is important that this facet of the amendment be adopted so that the people in the State of Nebraska can take advantage of some of those opportunities afforded. Thank you.

SENATOR CHRONISTER: Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: This is a close, is it not, Mr. Speaker?

SENATOR CHRONISTER: That is correct.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you. I am not nor have I ever been a party to any agreement with respect to the language, although apparently some discussions occurred in the Banking Committee. This body is free from any obligation and is capable of making up its own mind between the two positions that are offered. Senator Newell indicates that the utilities have an inherent conflict of interest and in this case cannot or should not be trusted. The Department of Welfare, at least in the City of Lincoln, has contracted with the utility, the Lincoln Electric System, and it has worked very well. Not only does LES regard it as a success but, I believe, so does the Department of Public Welfare and I have no evidence in the utilization of LES, that there has been some flagrant violation or misuse of that authority. It has simply meant that this program has been better administered in the City of Lincoln. That request came from, by the way, ratepayers and people in the City of Lincoln who wanted this kind of approach and it was permitted. Now, I think it seems logical if you want to have this program available to people that you have it in central locations which are easily accessible, which are open in business hours, for which there is a course of conduct that makes clear that when you have energy problems, these are the people you come and talk to. For that reason I think the utilities are a very logical source for this service. It is not binding. If a utility does not want to utilize and contract for this power or authority they need not do so but in the event this is something they wish to offer and be used as a tool for the elderly and handicapped and poor, our traditional welfare recipients who are utility users, I see no reason to deny