

March 14, 1984

LB 941

drivel about running people out of business and being so terrible to the industry. If consumption of alcohol goes down it is not going to be because of the tax. It is because people are just consuming less and I don't think we can control that in this Legislature, therefore, I hope that when we are through with this discussion that you will vote to move LB 941 so that at least in this year we have a little income coming in for some of the extra things that we need to do. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator. The Chair recognizes Senator Higgins.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President, Senator Kahle just told you that the industry won't pay this tax, the consumer will. Well consumer translates taxpayer so I guess if you follow Senator Kahle's line of reasoning he is saying let's tax the taxpayers some more. Let's raise it again on them. All this talk you have been hearing about this bill, about all the alcoholics, there is nothing in this bill that says this revenue would be earmarked to treat alcoholism so what is the point? The point is, the introducers of this bill are coming in through the back door. They haven't got the courage to come up with a bill for prohibition so they are going to tax the industry to the point where eventually alcohol will be wiped out. Now I wish they would be forthright and just come through with a bill that says let's do away with all alcohol and see if the people want that. Senator Pirsch said she wants to equalize taxes because of inflation. The inflation has hurt taxes. Well if it has hurt taxes so that they don't buy as much as they used to on alcohol I wonder how Senator Pirsch would feel if we equalize taxes by raising telephone taxes. I think that is fair. I'm sure the taxes we get off the telephone industry do not amount to as much after inflation. And then we are told about all the alcoholics so because of all the alcoholics, and that is not a big percentage. Figures sound big but what is the percentage of drinkers that are alcoholics? Nobody knows and nobody can prove one way or the other but Senator Pirsch says we have alcoholics, therefore, let's raise the taxes. The users should pay. Well how about a bill then that says because of all the