

April 5, 1984

LB 561

other states now. It is no big deal to do this, except, like he says, in the areas where I live, for instance, you have to send people eighty miles if you just have a scratch on the eyelid. There is no reason to send them to an MD because an MD cannot do the job. He does not have a slit lamp, so to speak, so he can monitor this or even see it. So you have to send them to an ophthalmologist. Certainly, I just think this is a heckling thing to try to kill the bill at this time. I would like to yield part of my time to Senator Higgins.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Higgins, would you like the remainder?

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President, I think all of you know how much I believe in training in the health field after getting the training bill passed last year for nurses' aides. So I can sympathize with Senator Johnson's concerns. However, I don't think any of you here believe that you need a heart specialist to take out tonsils and that basically is what this argument is. Optometrists receive probably more training in the parts that they are going to treat the eye than the ophthalmologist. Most of his training comes really for surgery. General practitioners do what the optometrist does and they don't have as much training as an optometrist does for this particular field. I just think it is kind of ridiculous to go get a heart specialist to take out your tonsils or an ingrown toenail when a GP can do it, and in this case we are talking about the same thing. Optometrists have the training so why should you pay the high price of going to a specialist, a man who is trained in surgery of the eyes? So I would urge you to vote for the advancement of LB 561 if Senator Vard Johnson intends to withdraw his amendment, and if he does not withdraw it, then I would say we have to defeat that amendment to strike the enacting clause. This is good legislation. It is good for the people of Nebraska no matter where they live, Omaha or Scottsbluff. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Chambers, then Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the