

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 20, 2003 LB 608

floor praising these slaughterhouses and how much good they're doing, I'm wondering where they and their ilk, because some of them were not in the Legislature at that time, were when it was necessary to do something to try to offer a modicum of protection to impoverished, vulnerable people, who were openly being tricked up into this part of the country, where they were exploited economically, discriminated against socially, educationally, and when it came to trying to find a decent place to live. White people in those states...in those counties and cities were very comfortable with that kind of exploitation and many are comfortable with it right now. So while you all express great concern for the slaveholder, I'm concerned about the chattels. And I know people can talk about the so-called and supposed benefits the chattels are getting. And they say, well, they're both on the same plantation. Yeah, but there's a difference between being in a position where you can declare property in a human being, and you're the human being in whom property has been declared. When I'm told that these people who work under these conditions are happy and cheerful and tell jokes, I'm reminded of what happened during slavery days when these so-called slave owners would send spies among the slaves, and they would come up on one and ask, how does your master treat you? If he or she made the mistake of telling the truth, straight down to Georgia or Louisiana they were sold to swelter in the cotton patches or broil in the cane fields. So you know what those slaves learned how to do when anybody asked them a question: What do you think of your master? My master is great. Does he feed you enough? And you can see his bones looking like the keys on a xylophone. My master gives me plenty of good food to eat. How does he dress you? And this person is in rags. Oh, he puts me in the finest of clothing. How does that make you feel? It makes me so happy I could sing. Well, let me hear you sing a song. And they took those kind of things to say that people of my complexion, my forbearers, were happy to be in slavery, because when they were asked about their conditions, they said the conditions were great. And anybody knew that should he or she be under those circumstances, there is no way he or she could say, if answering honestly, that that was a great way to live; that when your bones are showing you're getting plenty of food and all the other things. Slaves learned how to lie for the purpose of self-preservation. So when you