

January 31, 1973

SENATOR SKARDA: Now. Your request for an opinion concerning the following question. Now gentlemen I want you to listen to it, I want you to be diverting yourself away, like I noticed you have been doing when Senator Chambers was speaking, cause he's speaking to you in sincerity and so am I. I'm going to tell you the facts of life and you be the judge. I ask this question, and I'm going to tell you the reason behind it. Could the Metropolitan Utilities District as an institution give away property owned by them to a civic group for use as a park facility, or could the Metropolitan Utilities District lease such a property to a specific group for the purpose I have previously stated and finally could the Metropolitan Utilities District donate such property to the city of Omaha for use as a park facility, and I'm going to tell you how this all come about, later on and the opinion you'll notice that if this was allowed we'd reach into all the other identities of government, I'm talking about Public Power Systems, Gas, and Water Systems like we have in the city where I come from. The logics behind this developed from a meeting that was in the north end of my district where the city of Omaha without notice to the tax payers, was going to put in a compacting plant, where they sort garbage and compact it and so on, and finally the people in the neighborhood got up in arms, they had a mass meeting at a church which Senator Mahoney and I attended, and as a result of that, they all appeared before the council the following Tuesday, and the quest-, for the park, or for the compacting plant, by the council was denied, and they finally recognized that people do have a voice in government. As a result of this the people made some statement of reference to why the Metropolitan Utilities District couldn't give this as a park. Well at that time I wrote for an opinion from the Attorney General because I surmised that I was going to get a letter from some member of the council taking themselves off the spot diverting the attention in a different direction relative to what the compacting plant was originally intended to do. So I wrote for the opinion and it happens to be the same day I got the opinion back was the 29th of this month, I got another letter back from Mr. Art Bradley, and prior to getting the letter back from Mr. Art Bradley, my good friend and seat mate Senator Syas told me I was going to get it so evidently he was aware of it, so this got in to be quite a political bind, but in this he asked me if I would introduce some legislation gentlemen, to take the power away from utilities in reference to the land they had and be made available for the park, and I want to broaden you a little bit if you do this, what you're doing it reaches in as I say to all the public identity the Attorney General said in the letter, Public Power and everything else, it goes on and on and on, but the real meat that's behind this as I find out from a phone call last night that Omaha Public Power has some acres available around the grounds that they have at 10th and Jones, and the people are interested in the river front development and I speak highly respective of them and I believe in the river front development, are going to propose that the legislature, not this session and maybe the following session add an amendment to it if we pass some sort of a bill against the utilities that will empower the OPPD to give this ground away. My friends this is what the project goes into, this is what the city council has been doing, they won't tell the people, this ground that the Metropolitan Utilities District has doesn't belong to the city of Omaha, it belongs, (inaudible) of government surrounding the city, the small towns and communities. Are they in such a great glorified position to say that they represent all these people, you know what I can't understand about it, as I understand it the constitution in the state of Nebraska, says every town under 5,000 population in the state of Nebraska shall elect their council by wards, and here we are concerned ourselves what we should do with Omaha. My friends my people have had it up to here and they can't stand any more. When they go to the council they are not heard, none of the council ever attend their meetings and listen to any of the consideration. I like Senator Chambers