

May 14, 1973

(Start Belt 22)

to the care of the mentally retarded and this is involved, Senator Carpenter, in this whole controversy. Those who may not want to close Beatrice but at least cut it down to let's say, six or seven hundred and as I understand now there's 1300 and at the top--at the top it had about 2200 and there are those that really don't want to give Beatrice even this much money because they want to reduce it in size as much as possible. I, for one and I think it's the feeling of at least a majority of the committee, we don't want to cut Beatrice down to where some people want to. We want to be fair. We think that some are trying to move too rapidly in this area. Therefore, I think this recommendation we start out with six cottages, see how the situation works, see how the decentralization of mental retardation works and then as per your bill that we passed to stagger capital construction appropriations, we have this flexibility, we can come back and take another look at it either next year or the following so I'd say first of all, we have a staff that gathers information, we take from them every ounce of facts that they have and then we come up with our own recommendations and in this case, based upon extreme pressure from many sides.

SENATOR CARPENTER: Thank you Senator. Let me say to Senator Carstens, if you feel that you have been unfairly treated--that's not the right word, if you haven't got what you think the need is, if you have any reasonable application requiring additional amounts insofar as I'm concerned, I'll be glad to try to help you.

PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes Senator Fred Carstens.

SENATOR CARSTENS: Well I want to get some information first from Senator Marvel if I could. I think you are aware of the lawsuits that have been filed by various, several groups in the State, Neb Ark and Lomar, whatever they call themselves which basically is an attack on the Beatrice State Home and that it does not provide proper care. Now we have been trying for years to remedy this situation at Beatrice. There was some justification that there was not proper care, primarily because the Legislature would never fund any projects. Now much has been accomplished and much is going on and I don't think that very many, in fact I don't think anybody in this Legislature outside of myself and probably one or two, know about the great improvements that have been made at Beatrice and are going on. Now in the Section 5 which provides for the authorization of cottages accommodating 96 residents is one of the--the cottage concept, first of all, is one other thing, Senator Carpenter, I di--I am critical of the, of the fact that we can never get these concepts in operation in Beatrice. We can get them in all kind of community based centers and so on regardless of cost but when it comes to Beatrice, we can't move anywhere, but the--one of the problems we had at Beatrice is the barracks type housing which is not air conditioned. It is not adequate, difficult to get in and out, it is difficult to teach or manage or control anything in there and this cottage system is one of the means by which this is attempted to be corrected. Now the cottages which were recommended by the Governor were 12. Now I believe that these--am I correct, Senator Marvel, these each would 96, the bill is not clear, I'm a little concerned about that.

SENATOR MARVEL: Well I, my figures show that, that there's 16, 16 beds in each cottage so if you build six you got 96 beds.

SENATOR CARSTENS: Okay. Now that takes care of 96. Now