

be, reject any attempt to change the pay plan now for if you start with a change, where are you going to stop? So I would ask you to wait and give this pay plan a chance before you proceed.

PRESIDENT: Senator Simpson, then Senator Whitney, then Senator Skarda.

SENATOR SIMPSON: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I am going to support the amendment. I think, probably, in my mind the most important group of state employees are the State troopers, people that take extra chances. They are highly trained, work alone and I think that we have a problem. We've seen in past years that we had to come in on the floor of the Legislature and ask for additional money for these people to keep them. The ones that are the best, we're losing to other law enforcement agencies in Nebraska and outside the state and I don't think that we can afford to train them and do it. We are way below the scale that they should be paid. I was ready with an amendment and had all of the facts in order to put this on the original 259 bill and when we went ahead and passed that without amendments, I didn't get the opportunity but I would have done it then so I will surely have to support it now and I think we should look at the importance of these people, the amount of money they are getting compared to other law enforcement, and what they do for Nebraska.

PRESIDENT: Senator Whitney, then Skarda, Stahmer, Waldron.

SENATOR WHITNEY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I received some letters from the wives of troopers who felt that they were not getting a sufficient increase in salary, so I contacted Mr. Peters, who is the Director of Personnel, with whom the Budget Committee has been working now for two years on this plan and I want to quote something in a letter here. He says, "Based upon the data available at this time, it is believed that the pay grade C-12 established for the trooper is an equitable one and a competitive one. I have great admiration for this excellent organization and would never want to see it placed in jeopardy. I've not heard that the Patrol is experiencing difficulty in recruiting men because of its pay structure." Now then, I got other information from Mr. Peters and that was that the minimum salary, for example, here for troopers is \$87 a month above that in the state of Iowa, \$49 above the state of Kansas. The minimum salary is \$187 above the minimum in South Dakota and we are in very good shape when you compare ours with other states and then there is another thing. We are increasing their fringe benefits this year by \$744 per year so that if a state trooper gets a zero increase, according to Mr. Peters, he has a plan worked out here demonstrating that the average trooper is going to get \$744 extra this next year because of the extra fringe benefits. For example, \$180 for life insurance and health insurance extra. There is going to be extra vacation time, extra sick leave time, and there are a few other extras and so, when this is all converted into dollars on the basis that he's used, it shows an extra \$744 and if you add \$5 a month, it comes up to \$804. Now I will have to say that I agree with Senator Marvel that we are attempting here to use the Director of Personnel to set up a pay plan. He has been working for two years on this and I've had members of the Roads Department come to me and say we want to do the same thing as this amendment here for the Highway Patrol. We feel we are not getting a proper consideration and so I feel if we piecemeal here in the Legislature, start picking this apart, we are never going to get through with it and we are never going to get it properly adopted.