

April 11, 1974

Now, Almighty God can't draw a lease that's going to make that any different. Because the facts are that and you still have to reckon with individuals. But if you take away the personality conflicts, you're not going to have the real objections that we have on this bill. Now, I have indicated and I know that others in here have indicated this same thing that where those personality conflicts do exist, that we will attempt to work with the board to erase those conflicts. And then where those conflicts or where there are discrepancies in the conduct of individuals, I hope that those issues can be resolved. But let's not kill a piece of legislation in which we need because of differences of personality. Let's not bring the bill back. Let's advance the bill. Again I want to say this. That those persons who say the method of determining the rentals were not fair or are not fair at the present time can not justify that statement because there has not...there have not been any of these cases or leases turned down to my knowledge. I think out of the entire number of leases that came up for renewal, there were only three that were not immediately renewed. There have been some substantial bonuses paid for the leases which indicates to me that perhaps the Board of Lands & Funds might not even be high enough on the rentals. I just, I find myself torn two ways. I really hesitate to stand here and say that the rentals should be higher. But on the basis again of the fact that the school children are involved, I have to ask that the bill have to be returned.

PRESIDENT: Next to speak is Senator Whitney. Then Senator Carpenter.

SENATOR WHITNEY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature. The constitution in my judgment still says that the state cannot take money out of the school fund which this bill would do and use it for digging irrigation wells and making other kinds of development on the land. Now, Senator Stull has a verbal opinion from Mr. Packett who is on the staff of the Attorney General. But I have in my hand here ....I have in my hand here an official...an official decision from the Attorney General, Clarence Meyer, to the effect...and I will read it here. The constitution after sitting out what shall be the perpetual or permanent funds then provides in section 4 that all other grants, gifts and devises, all interest arising from the perpetual funds and all the rents of the unsold school land shall be exclusively applied to the support and maintainance of the common schools. We feel that this language will not permit a construction authorizing the expenses of administration of the trust to be paid from the temporary school fund. Now the temporary school fund is the interest on permanent school funds and the rentals from the land. And so I'm saying the constitution has not been changed since this opinion was written and therefore in my judgment an official opinion is worth more than a verbal opinion from one of the attorneys who are on the Attorney General's staff. Now, Senator Schmit points out something about the rentals. Now, since 1952, the state as Board of Educational Lands & Funds as a result of a Supreme Court decision has been required to set the rental and then put every lease up for auction bid. Which means that when you put a lease up for an auction bid that they may pay a bonus. And this, the Board of Educational Lands & Funds has been doing for many, many years. Ever since 1953 so that the rents are as high as they can possibly be and if they're not as high as they should be, then the public through the option process and this option process was stated by the