

April 11, 1974

PRESIDENT: This might be the time to do it.

SENATOR CARPENTER: I prefer...sure....

SENATOR DE CAMP: Okay. I will address that question now. About two hours ago, something happened that made me realize that I had mishandled this bill. Senator Cavanaugh came up to me and he said, what the heck is all this stuff about school lands? He says I've heard you talk about it in here for the last couple of years. He says I was asking a couple of other senators. They couldn't explain it very well. What is it? And I realized listening to Senator Cavanaugh that Senator Cavanaugh probably is in the same position as most other senators and certainly the people of Nebraska in that the school lands which represent one-half billion dollars of assets of the State of Nebraska, the most valuable thing the state has, are not understood. And so with your permission, I'll give you about a four or five minute explanation of their history and where they are now and exactly how this bill changes it. But it's going to have to unfortunately expose a black mark, no offense intended, Ernie, in the history of this legislative body itself. The lands go back more than 100 years ago when Nebraska was about to become a state and the federal government set aside certain amounts of lands in each county in the State of Nebraska which.....

PRESIDENT: Senator Carpenter.

SENATOR CARPENTER: I don't want a background....I.....

SENATOR DE CAMP: I....I think I have the right to speak, Senator Carpenter, to explain it.

SENATOR CARPENTER: I just want to know what this bill does that the other bill don't.....

SENATOR DE CAMP: I will explain it.

PRESIDENT: All right. Try to condense it, Senator DeCamp, if you can.

SENATOR DE CAMP: The land was to be used by the state, of course, to develop and set up schools and the money, income from the land was to be used for that purpose. Throughout the 100 years history, the lands were abused and in the following ways. They were used for political patronage for a lot of people, 40, 50, 60, 70 years ago who were senators here. You didn't get paid much as a senator but you got control and the right to use school lands. And if you'll check the record, you'll found this was done extensively. Another thing that happened was that part of the school lands were sold....part of the school lands....

PRESIDENT: All right, wait a minute, Senator DeCamp.... Senator Carpenter wonders if he could interrupt you there. Please. All right, Senator Carpenter.

SENATOR CARPENTER: Some specific proof of the charges you just made.

SENATOR DE CAMP: There is specific proof, I'm not going to bring out the records here but I'll sit down with you and document cases.

SENATOR CARPENTER: No, I want the record on top of the table. You made some serious charges and in view of the repetition