

March 20, 1979

LB 508

why we killed 508 and I think 507 will come out.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Maresh.

SENATOR MARESH: Mr. President, I support the movement of this bill to the floor. I think that this is an important issue that we should discuss at length. Earlier in the session we had LR 9 that deals with two branch lines that are now presently being proposed to abandon and I think we need to... The Legislature saw fit to pass this resolution to tell the I.C.C. not to abandon these branch lines since the federal government is taking a look at how to prevent the branch lines from being abandoned and I think by getting this bill on the floor we will get the message back to Washington that we are serious about these branch lines to be maintained. I think the railroads are, in fact, doing an injustice to the State of Nebraska by allowing these branch lines to deteriorate and not to provide boxcars for the small elevators. I think we should look to the Missouri River and the Mississippi as a means of getting the grain down to the Gulf. This morning we had breakfast, the Business and Labor Committee had breakfast with the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor was there as well and the Governor's aides and I propose that this was not a subject to discuss probably with Business and Labor but it has to do with employment in the state to provide a terminal elevator on the Missouri River, say probably in Omaha, and get this grain down to the Gulf in barges and keep the boxcars in the State of Nebraska. If this comes about I think we could maintain these branch lines. They would be used more and the railroads could justify maintaining these branch lines and providing cars for the small elevators. This is something I think we need to take a look at. I discussed this with the Executive Secretary of the Co-op Council that the Co-op should take a look at using the river, to invest in a terminal and the barge system, and if we would provide this kind of a transportation down to the Gulf, we wouldn't have to be looking for unit trains that serve only the main lines and do not provide service for the small towns. So I think we need to get this to the floor of the Legislature to get the message back to our congressional delegation that we are serious about maintaining our branch lines. I hope you all support this motion of Senator Schmit's.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator George.

SENATOR GEORGE: Thank you, Mr. President. A lot of us are certainly interested in maintaining those branch