

March 26, 1979

LB 234

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Reutzel, are you ready to close on the motions, four different motions? Do you want to close?

SENATOR REUTZEL: Yes, sir.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay.

SENATOR REUTZEL: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I would like to refer you to section 1 of the bill, subsection 2. It says, "All qualified citizens have the opportunity to be considered for jury service; subsection 3 All qualified citizens fulfill their obligation to serve as jurors when summoned for that purpose;" About fifty percent of those eligible to vote are registered. Senator Kahle uses the premise that anyone who goes to court is a registered voter. That certainly is not the case. The Constitution says if we are going to be tried, we have a right to a jury trial by our peers, and by the way, we are eliminating fifty percent of those, fifty percent of the people who have no way to serve on a jury because they simply are not registered to vote. Registration to vote was a simple method, that was a simple list to use and it was widely adopted but now states are going to expand those lists recognizing the shortcomings of a voter registration list. Fewer and fewer people are voting every year. Registrations are dwindling. I see no reason why we should not adopt these amendments. All we are doing is expanding that opportunity to serve. It is an opportunity, it is an obligation. It is a privilege that we have, yes, but it is certainly more than that. It is an obligation to serve. We live in this country. We have got a fine country. We live here under a free form of government. One of those obligations to this country is to serve on a jury duty, to be tried by your peers. That is all we are saying. Other states have adopted this with no problem. This is permissive. Senator Cope has never been on jury duty he says but there are others in his county who have served several times. We are simply asking to expand the list. Other states have done it without any problem. We are asking that you have your constitutional right to have a trial by a jury composed of your peer group. We are talking about very little cost. We are talking about the real thrust of the two years of study. Without further comment and seeing that we are just about ready to adjourn, I would close but I would hope that the body would adopt these amendments and make the bill what it was truly meant to be after the two years of study.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Can I direct a question to you, Senator