

April 3, 1979

LB 143

SENATOR SIMON: Mr. President and members of the body, I will try and keep my remarks brief. Senator Venditte raised some points about the bill, but it was kind of interesting because when I talked to him before the adjournment at lunch, he hadn't even read it. Of course, it's always very easy to talk on bills you know nothing about but it helps if you've read it and then you can discuss it intelligently. All the bill does is provide for procedures if a person has a dispute on a bill. Now I'm sure, Senator Venditte, we could get a bill passed without any trouble as they did in Pennsylvania, a very stringent bill when somebody died because the utilities were shut off, but I choose to be a person of vision and foresight. You may look in the past, that's your prerogative, but I choose to look into the future. I think that's the intelligent way to go. I know, Senator Kremer, you had a question, Senator Kremer...do you still want to ask me that question during my time, because I'll be happy to respond to you?

SENATOR KREMER: Senator Simon, I indicated to you in talking to you personally that I had a problem with... (interruption) that has to do with the conference in my opinion, this is delay upon delay. In other words, the bill does not come to me as a subscriber until after I had used the utility for thirty days, and then I get a bill, and then I have a problem with the bill, so I call the employee and I say to him, I've got a problem here. So he sets up a conference. It has to be within fourteen days. So we've got another fourteen days. Now in my town, they will go along the second month before any action is taken, before they attempt to disconnect it, so we've got sixty days plus fourteen days is what... seventy-four days, and then there can be an appeal after that. So in other words, in my opinion, as I understand the amended bill, that we're really up to seventy, eighty, ninety days before the problem is resolved, and by that time this bill can be up...what, two, three or four hundred dollars. That's my problem.

SENATOR SIMON: Okay, Senator, well you asked me to respond to that...

SENATOR KREMER: Yes, I would like you to respond.

SENATOR SIMON: ...and I gladly gave you the time to ask the question on my time, because I think it's a legitimate point. The bill only deals with disputed bills first of all. It doesn't deal with the problem of the man who