

February 6, 1980

LB 319

not pay them the going wage, I think it is unconscionable and I think it is wrong. I ask that you vote favorably on this amendment which says that any person who is confined and hired out under this bill will receive the same wages as those who are doing similar work.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Kahle, do you wish to speak to the Chambers amendment?

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. Speaker, members, we have had a lot of debate on this and I will oppose the Senator Chambers amendment because I think there are circumstances that go along with hiring prison inmates that does cause problems and extra cost to the person that is hiring them and also to whoever may have to do the transportation end of it. I think we should get away from the idea that someone in prison has all the rights and privileges of those that are outside. I think you lost some of your rights and privileges or you wouldn't be in that prison and I certainly support Senator Schmit's idea to keep these people busy and to provide work for them over the State of Nebraska. I also kind of resent the idea that it was sorely inferred that we don't need to teach them anything about agriculture because that is a lowly profession that nobody else wants to do and I think you can learn an awfully lot from agriculture no matter what kind of a profession you may have. You might learn even a little bit about the birds and bees. So, I don't think we should encumber this bill. I think Senator Schmit is right, that the director should have the right to determine when and who and how much these inmates are going to make. I am not trying to degrade labor. I think that perhaps we are degrading it already by allowing them to work but I certainly feel that idle hands are what makes the trouble and that in my own particular area where we have used prisoners to do some park work and some of the other things that have to be done, I think it has worked out very well and they have been happy about it and also the people that have had the work done. So I don't think we should encumber this bill with another amendment that says specifically that you have to pay so much. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Schmit, we are on the Chambers amendment to LB 319.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I do not like to oppose Senator Chambers amendment because I tend to agree with what he is concerned about but I will oppose it because I do not think it is necessary. I think that you have to allow individual discretion and

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