

April 14, 1980

LB 939

SENATOR MURPHY: I have two. I would like to take them in order, number 1 first.

CLERK: Okay, yes, sir.

SENATOR MURPHY: Amendment #1 deals with the recommendation that was made by the interim study, by the sunset study committee and that was that the board be expanded to a five member commission. Now in order to indicate the need, may I say that Atokad Race Track begun its racing season on the 19th of September when it was organized. At that time Omaha was running forty days a year. Since that time the Madison track has been removed and somehow Ak-Sar-Ben has come up with an additional twenty days, a fifty percent increase, twenty days, and in order to accomplish that, the racing dates at Atokad were shoved back two weeks, and when I say "shoved back", I am talking about into the blizzard. Now Senator Schmit has recommended that maybe we could solve the problem by licensing reindeer to race at Atokad inasmuch as they must run in the snow but the proposition of racing in Nebraska was not meant to be Omaha only. Now you can say whatever you wish. I will tell you that Atokad is slowly going broke which is part of the design and I can tell you that is extremely unfair and I hope this body will not accept the urging of those who would deny some kind of equity to the control over these tracks that has brought this condition about. That track and its contribution to racing and the enjoyment of those in that area to see it needs to survive. It cannot do it as long as there is a one man commission running racing in this state and that is precisely what we have. I ask that you adopt the five man commission as recommended by the sunset study commission notwithstanding the arm twisting that has been going on from others who would oppose it. In fairness, let me say even if we had three commissioners, we would have three tracks that had one commissioner and two single tracks with two separate commissioners. There is nothing at all fair or compassionate about the arrangement that we have and particularly the manner in which it has proven itself to be completely Omaha oriented. I ask for the support of this on behalf of the Columbus track, Atokad and Grand Island, whom you have recently seen have to suspend their races because the horses couldn't run in the ankle deep ooze of the spring thaw. There is nothing fair about what the commission has been doing and I ask that you make that a five man commission. I move the adoption of the amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Sieck.

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