

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion lost. We now are addressing the Wesely amendment to the Vickers...to the bill, LB 34. Is there any further discussion? Senator Wesely, do you want to close on your amendment?

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, and I appreciate the support on the opposition to the Rumery amendment which I think would have really hurt the amendment which is now before you. What we are trying to do is to provide some flexibility to the power districts but we are in a situation where we're compromising and both sides don't like it and that is probably the best kind of compromise you can have. It is a situation where we really don't want to allow these maintenance contracts to be negotiated any more in the way they have in the past. It is just obviously there has been some serious problems with it, but at the same time the power districts evidently do have a problem with some of these particular maintenance and repair contracts, they don't feel they can let for bid and truly serve the ratepayers by doing that and they want the chance then to negotiate. Well, if they are going to do that, then we say, number one, an engineer has got to certify the fact that they can't let it for bid and, number two, a two-thirds supermajority of the board would have to agree with that fact they can't let it for bid and then they would have to advertise and allow people to negotiate, so that everybody had a chance to get their bid in. Well, now there is still concern that despite the safeguards in this proposal that there may be abuses by some of the power districts and that there still may be some problems that we have seen in the past with this situation. Well, let me just pledge to you right now, with the adoption of this amendment and hopefully the passage of the bill, I will certainly be monitoring the situation and I think Senator Vickers and others on the floor who have been interested in this will as well. And I also think the contractors of this state and the labor unions of this state, who have been involved with the construction and maintenance-repair of power district activities, will also keep on top of the situation. And just as a warning to the power districts of Nebraska, if they think that this amendment and this flexibility which we are providing to them in good faith is abused, they will have a price to pay, that there will be changes and the original bill which would have allowed them no flexibility will be the first thing introduced and I will pledge that right now, if there are any abuses to this flexibility we provide them. But at this time I, in good faith, feel that they do have some concerns that are legitimate and we ought to adopt the amendment and advance the bill and take care of a problem in a fair manner.