

now where they cooperate with the Omaha police division and if arrests need to be made, they are made. Usually, if a fire is set deliberately, that is what arson is, and the intent is to obtain benefit from it, then the person who does it is not going to be staying around. So this bill is not in response to any problem that has arisen in Omaha or anywhere else in the state. It is a situation that came to the attention of some of the nice middleaged gentlemen in Omaha who work for the Fire Department. They want to carry pistols. There is no need in them going about armed. It does not help them determine the cause, the origin or circumstances of fires. Never have they been in a situation where they had to engage in a shoot out. Never did they present a single situation where they needed to carry warrants or supboenas on their person that they could fill out on the spot and place somebody under arrest, place somebody under oath, interrogate them, make them produce books and papers, cite them for perjury if they make a misstatement. All of these things are in this bill and there was no justification shown for any of them. Fire investigators should remain that. They investigate the causes, origins and circumstances of fires and that is sufficient. I asked Senator Newell why the State Fire Marshal was not here to support this bill at the committee hearing, and, Senator Newell, the most he could say is that Wally Barnett, the Fire Marshal, didn't oppose it. I talked to Wally Barnett about it and he doesn't see it as one of those things that he could actively support because the necessity for it has not been shown. Now, the State Fire Marshals can carry pistols, but there is a different situation where they go throughout the state in isolated areas and are not accompanied by a law enforcement person when they make an investigation. In Omaha they have these people with them. A thin, weak as cream argument was offered in the committee that there are not always officers on duty at the time these people go out to make their investigation, such as very early in the morning. So I guess what they are envisioning is something which does not occur now, and that's that when they get the right to carry guns, issue supboenas and all these other things, they are going to trot out at four o'clock in the morning and make some arrests, serve some warrants, or command people to produce books, papers, and be interrogated. I think that is ridiculous. This bill would make a laughing stock of the Legislature and justifiably should do so. The law enforcement function that needs to be met in Omaha in connection with fire investigation is being met. Remember, this bill is not an arson preventer. It is not an arson detector. It gives