

March 25, 1981

LB 190

SPEAKER MARVEL: The next item, 190.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 190, the E & R amendments were adopted by the membership on March 19 of this year. There was a motion by Senator Schmit to indefinitely postpone the bill. That laid the bill over. We are now prepared to take up that motion, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, are there amendments offered to the bill?

CLERK: Yes, sir, I have several.

SENATOR SCHMIT: I guess that I would like to say that I am not really anxious to kill the bill if the bill could be amended properly but I guess at this time, without knowing what those amendments are, that I would speak to the kill motion. Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I offered this kill motion on LB 190 because I think it is important that we recognize and do so at this time the situation in which we are projecting ourselves, not only for the next year but many years to come after that. The State of Nebraska is a unique state in that it is a sort of funnel for many of the trains which carry coal to the other states east and south of us. Those trains are of course, necessarily going to pass through many Nebraska communities. The fact that this coal traffic is going to increase dramatically for the next number of years is well known. We also know that the production of grain in Nebraska is going to continue to increase and with the continuing increase and the exports of Nebraska grain, we are going to find an increased number of those grain trains heading west to the western gulf ports rather than south as has been the case in the past. All of this is going to result in a lot of additional traffic through towns such as Columbus which is one of the towns which Senator Dworak and I represent, Schuyler, Senator Chronister represents and many other of the cities along the main lines. What we are doing on this bill here is that we are repealing the ton mile tax provision which we enacted last year and we are substituting for it the so-called "train mile tax." Senator DeCamp has explained for you and I think fairly, the amount of revenue you can expect to receive from the imposition of the train mile tax. I just want to say this, that as time goes by the length of the trains will increase. The tonnages will increase. We can expect fewer and fewer of the small trains which we have experienced in the past and the problems to the cities along those main lines are going to increase also. In the past we have expected about 80% of the money that went to provide grade crossings would come from the federal government. I think if any of you have contacted members of Congress lately you know what is going to happen to those funds. They are just not going to be there. 1