

February 11, 1982

LB 782

SENATOR CLARK: The committee amendments are adopted. Now on the bill. Senator Marvel. Yes, on the bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: 782 in its present form has had a previous relative who discussed this matter before the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. 782 had a second hearing this last month and there were at least a thousand police there. And let me read to you just briefly what the purpose is, and then if there are questions, we can probably field them after.... we will have to field them before the session is over, but this is what it says. 'LB 782 was introduced in an attempt to expand the application of merit commissions to counties which now do not have them. Under the proposal, any county with a population in excess of 25,000 will be required to establish and maintain a merit commission.' There are some other items, but let me say this, the purpose of this bill is to attempt to create a merit commission which is beneficial to the police officers and among other things will assist the average officer in retaining his or her position regardless of which type of sheriff is elected. And if you like, we have facts and figures to indicate that the mass turnover in police officials in the state results in a gigantic amount of money and this bill in effect... this bill in effect will solve part of the problem and help retain qualified employees when a transition in government takes place. Now that is a brief analysis of the bill, Mr. President, and I would renew the motion to advance the bill.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Kahle on the advancement.

SENATOR KAHLE: Mr. President, we heard the bill in the Government Committee, in fact, I guess we heard it twice, last year and again this year, and one of the reasons that we did not move it last year was the fact that only I believe some police officers, sheriffs, came from the Omaha area to testify and really the bill... I believe Hastings is the area that is most interested in this. I might mention, Senator Marvel gave you the ceiling or the floor or whatever you want to call it of 25,000, a county of 25,000 where this would be in effect. And the counties that would be affected by that change, incidentally it's 40,000 now I believe, would be Adams, Buffalo, Dodge, Lincoln, Madison, Platte, and Scottsbluff Counties would be the ones that could go to this merit system. The smaller counties would not be affected at all. And what was brought out in the hearing