

debated it at some length on General File in May of last year. The bill was then amended by Senator Lamb and it was advanced then to Select File. Now since then, we have had an opportunity to attempt to work out a compromise on this issue which is of importance and of considerable controversy within the judiciary, within those district and county judges that would be affected by the original bill and by this amendment. The bill originally, as you will recall, reduced the number of judicial districts from approximately 21 to approximately 12, thereby, consolidating districts so that the judicial system might operate more efficiently. Now there is considerable opposition to that concept from a number of rural areas in the state. Senator Barrett, Senator Baack and I working with some judges from central and western Nebraska, working with the Court Administrator's Office, are now offering to you this compromise proposal which is summarized in a handout which you should all have on your desks, and I would encourage you to read the summary analysis. I think it outlines quite clearly what the amendment does and what the purpose of the amendment is. The amendment does not change any judicial district boundary lines nor does it deprive any county of having a county judge or any county of having a district judge. Further, it does not abolish any of the one-judge districts. That probably still needs to be done in some instances but this particular proposal does not bring that about. It does not either abolish any one-judge districts by consolidating their territory with a neighboring district, or in any other respect affecting current boundary lines. What this amendment does do, however, is it sets up a continuing review process of the need for...of the manpower needs of the judiciary throughout the state by setting up a review process so that once a judge retires or resigns or passes away, we don't have an automatic lockstep procedure whereby that vacancy is automatically filled. Instead a two step procedure will set in. First, the Supreme Court will determine whether, based on caseload, the caseload situation, there is a need to fill a vacancy, and then if the Supreme Court does declare that there is a need to fill a vacancy, then the decision is sent over to a new Judicial Resources Commission, the membership of which is set up in virtually the same fashion as the current Judicial Qualifications Commission, and that Judicial Resources Commission then decides where the vacancy is to exist, whether it is to exist in the county in which it originated, in the district in which it originated, or elsewhere in the