

SENATOR LANDIS: ...less than it was 10 years ago, less than it was 15 years ago.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Time is up.

SENATOR LANDIS: We have not kept measure with the cost of living in this country. And this is a fair measure of doing that and taking it out of the niggardly realm of political machinations, which is the way these benefits have been determined over the years.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Senator Hefner on the indefinite postponement motion.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to support the kill motion on this bill, LB 958. Let's go back a year. Last session we just raised workmen's compensation benefits from \$200 to \$225 a week. This is a 12.5 percent increase where the inflationary rate is around 3 to 4 percent. This is costing businesses and industries money. If I recall our workmen's comp went up this year an amount that I can't say exactly, but anyway it went up. It went up along with our liability insurance and other insurance. The cost of insurance is getting very expensive. Let me remind you, this morning, that this benefit, that this \$225 a week is tax exempt from federal income tax. It is exempt from social security costs. It is exempt from the state income tax. So that means that if you are in a 25 percent tax bracket, or a 30 percent tax bracket you wouldn't be subject to pay this, or the 7 percent social security and the state income tax. If we approve this bill, if we are not successful in killing this bill, and approve it, the benefits will go up approximately 7 percent in 1987, certainly more than the cost of living index or the inflationary rate; 12 percent in 1988, and another 11 percent in 1989. Senator Landis says that we have not kept pace with the inflationary rate or the cost of living. Let me remind you that workmen's comp benefits have gone up 237 percent in the last 15 years, so I don't think we've been too shabby on that. I feel that this is too much of an increase during these stressful economic times that we are experiencing. We are seeing this in the rural areas, in the small towns. In fact all you need to do is drive up and down main street and you see many empty storefronts. I feel by increasing workmen's comp you would just be adding to