

SENATOR HALL: Mr. President and members, I rise to oppose the kill motion. I'm sure Senator Barrett expected that. Senator Barrett, for you information, I would think that the average citizen could call the Department of Labor, 475-8451, much easier than looking through the statute books that they probably have at home on the shelf, and find out what the average weekly wage is. I think I would do that, myself anyway. LB 958 deals with the floating maximum and minimum as we have talked and there has been a lot of talk about what other states do. Currently, we have 31 states that use this system that fund it at a 100 percent of the average weekly wage or better. Iowa was mentioned earlier. Iowa's maximum is 200 percent of the average weekly wage. Argument has been made that should we go to this we would be delegating our authority. When we deal with the specifics, as we have in the past, where we set the maximum and the minimum in statutes in the specific amount, the argument is that government is too involved in private business. I would argue that by moving to the maximum and minimum with the floating, we are letting the market set the rate. I would urge the body to reject the kill motion. There, I feel, is much interest at this time in this bill. It is something that we need to take a real hard look at this year and I think to kill it at this time would not do any of us any good. Thank you very much.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thanks, Senator Hall. Senator Schmit, you are next, but before I let you start, if I may, I would like to introduce to you some guests of Senator Vickers, Phyllis Lyons from McCook and Margaret Baker from Palisade, under the south balcony. Would you rise so that we may recognize you and welcome to the Legislature. Senator Schmit, please.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the body, it was my bill last year which raised the benefit to 225. That was a substantial increase, as has been indicated here this morning, to 12.5 percent. On several occasions I opposed reducing that amount to a lesser amount. I had made a commitment to attempt to hold the line at 225 and we were successful in doing so. I felt it was at that time a fair amount. I think that I pointed out also at that time that as an employer that the workmen's comp is not just a benefit for the employee but it is protection for the employer. Many times on this floor and many times as we listen to candidates for office, we hear the indications from the