

would hope we could get to a vote relatively soon.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Hannibal, did you wish to complete the introduction of the bill?

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Yes, if I may, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature. What Senator John DeCamp has just said is, I think, is very true. You've all been talked to about this issue from both sides and there isn't very much of what we're going to say on the floor today that is really going to make any significant difference, but just in case, just in case there are a couple, I want to tell you how I view the issue and I see the issue on just three major points, three major points to the elimination or the retention of a caboose on all trains over a thousand feet long. One is a labor management issue. One is an economics issue and one is a safety issue. Senator DeCamp talked briefly about a couple of them. Labor management issue, the facts are that the UTU in negotiating with the railroads back in 1982, again in 1985 and as a national union came to an agreement with the railroads that elimination of some cabooses on trains would be agreeable, would be worked out and would be an orderly process. They agreed to it as a national union. If labor and management issue is an issue we want to talk about, I'd be very happy to talk to you about it. The second issue is the economics. From an economics standpoint, running a caboose on the back of a train, if it's unnecessary, it doesn't serve any really useful purpose, is a matter of cost. Railroads estimate in Nebraska the cost is around \$6 million per year and that is estimated on elimination of cabooses on somewhere between 25 and 50 percent of the trains running through the state. If it is an unnecessary cost, if it shouldn't be there, why have it mandated? It is costing us \$6 million estimated right now that could be doing several different things, one of which, of course, is lowering the cost to the railroads, increasing their profitability. One is that it could be shipped back to the shippers and the consumers in the form of lower costs or, at the very least, to forestall an increase in the cost. Why have it? Well, the reason that we talked about it three years ago was the safety issue. Three years ago there were a majority of the Legislature said, safety is important and it is so important we want to mandate this and we don't know whether we're going to give up any safety if we allow some of these cabooses to be taken off. And three years ago the railroad association, in fact,