

Trains. This is a statement by the Interstate Commerce Commission. But their office of Policy and Analysis has stated that cabooses can be removed from most trains without hurting safety. According to the ICC, all the functions, once served by the cabooses, have either been made obsolete by new technology, or can be adequately served without the caboose. We've come a long ways. We've come a long ways in technological advances in recent years. This eliminates the usefulness of cabooses on most trains. I realized that years ago we did need these cabooses, but we don't need them now in this era. The days when the cabooses were a necessary and justifiable part of train operations have long passed. I know that many of you here today are concerned about the jobs. So let's just analyze that a little bit. Will dropping cabooses reduce railroad employment? The answer is no. The drive to eliminate cabooses does not affect crew size because there are no jobs performed from the caboose which cannot be done as well by trainmen riding in the locomotive. The size of the trains, the size of the train crew, like the use of cabooses, is covered by collective bargaining agreements. The United Transportation Union agreed to a gradual elimination of some cabooses in the natural agreement that it signed in 1982. So, at this time, I would certainly urge you to vote against the kill motion, and then vote to advance the bill.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson, please.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, three years ago when this issue presented itself to us, I, along with 24, 25, 26 other senators, voted consistently to support the state's requirement that all trains carry cabooses. I did that because three and four years ago the issue was a new issue to our state, because for the first time, by virtue of negotiations between the United Transportation Union and the railroad industry, the railroad, for the first time, did not, pursuant to those agreements, have to carry cabooses on all trains. So the question finally arose for me, as a senator and for us as a state, whether or not, notwithstanding those labor negotiations, the state should require trains to carry cabooses. And it seemed to me at the time that the better part of discretion was to go slow and to have the trains carry the cabooses. Let us wait awhile and see what happens with other states. Well, we now know. The statistics are in. The statistics have indicated to this state that there