

May 14, 1973

PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis, do you care to respond?

SENATOR LEWIS: I certainly would, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I believe this is a priority bill and I think Senator Marvel hit right on it on being on the spot for it. I think the people of this state have said that we ought to do something for the retired people, particular retired public servants. They said that in the constitutional amendment. This wasn't a new idea with me. This was initiated last session by the members of the Legislature to put it on the ballot, specifically, for that reason and I presume it had some merit at that time and so you put it on the ballot to be able to provide some assistance for retired people. People of the state overwhelmingly said let's do it. What I'm trying to do is carry out some say the permissive legislation of the state, of the people of the state, and I say it's the mandated intent of the people of this state. In my judgment, this is a priority bill and it's a bill which really doesn't affect my district that much. I'd like to tell you I have less than a dozen retired teachers in my district but there are those that are in serious circumstances throughout this state and there are a number in your district, Senator Marvel.

SENATOR MARVEL: I am well aware of this.

SENATOR LEWIS: And I'd say this is a priority bill and this is what I've said to this Legislature from the beginning. I, personally, am prepared to vote on the merits of every "A" bill here. I have the judgment to reserve voting for the money bill, if I do not think it is a priority money bill, and I have the responsiveness to reject those that can wait. We have some people in some dire straits. This is a bill mandated by the people in my judgment and I think that it's a priority with most of us and I think it's time to move on with it. I am a little disappointed, in fact, I am a lot disappointed that we've played politics with money and I think that's exactly what it is and just call it by whatever. I think this is a bill that is needed. I think it is one that the people have spoken out for and there is no rational judgment not to accept this bill and not to vote on it.

(End of Belt #3)