

March 1, 1976

Committee and signed by Senators Lewis, Rumery, Fitzgerald, Koch and George. Read title. The bill was first considered February 26th and there are Committee amendments which have been adopted, Mr. President. There are presently pending some amendments offered by Senator Frank Lewis which are found on page 807 of the Legislative Journal.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Frank Lewis.

SENATOR F. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, I have some figures on the way and they will be here shortly, I assume. LB 752 was an attempt to reestablish some of the funds that were cut from the State Department of Education and that issue has been taken care of, but more importantly, 752 is the vehicle for the final resolution of the dollars owed to the local school districts in terms of special education. As you recall, this Legislature by mandate said to local school districts, Alliance, Omaha, Fremont, North Platte, Bellevue, Ralston, Lincoln, et cetera, that you shall provide special education. This Legislature said that we take the commitment for 90% of the excess cost. One of the most difficult things we had to do was determine excess cost and all the applications were not in when we left this time last year. The Appropriations Committee did put in a million six in terms of the deficiency appropriation last year. The local school districts are still out over five hundred thousand dollars. This is not a deficiency appropriation to the State Department of Education. This is to make up the final payment to the local school districts that on the word and the mandate of the Legislature put out that local money with the Legislature's commitment that they would take care of 90% of the funding. The Legislature almost got there. They did about 86% worth and the rest of that money, if not provided by the state, will have to be absorbed, will have to be taken care of by the local school district. I think it is extremely important that we start this out on an even keel, that when we say to the Scottsbluff School District, you provide the service and we will fund it at 90% that that is precisely what we mean. This money goes to Fall City and Nebraska City for services they have already performed. This meets our commitment of 90%. If the Legislature doesn't believe 90% is the correct figure for the next year, there is a bill up there, 761, that you can set the exact figure with. But when you tell the local school district, this is a service we want and these are the dollars we are going to spend, then you have got a commitment to that local school district because the ultimate payer of it is that property tax owner in your district. This half a million dollars is not for the purpose of the State Department of Education. It is the purpose of reimbursement of the local school districts for the 90% that we said that we were going to pay. This will make honest men out of us, and women. I would want to make sure I put that in. This is what we said we