

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Maresh.

SENATOR MARESH: Mr. President, this concerns two branch lines, one that is in Senator Burrows and my District from Beatrice to Jansen. The other branch line is in Senator George's District from Blair to Tekamah and what we are asking is that ICC, this will be directed to ICC, that they forego any action on allowing these branch lines to be abandoned while the states are setting problems to resolve this abandonment of branch lines. This is a nationwide concern. Many branch lines are up for abandonment and Congress and the various states are concerned about this and various measures are being considered to resolve the problem. One I handed out material which would propose sort of a cooperative like the REA of low interest loans to be made to individuals and corporations and various people that are interested in maintaining the branch lines to incorporate and provide funding to upgrade the branch lines. We have two bills before the Nebraska Legislature, LB 507 and 508 which Agriculture and Environment Committee sponsored that would establish a commission to deal with this problem. So I think this is very timely to tell ICC to hold everything until various states and the Congress come up with some solutions to the branch line abandonment. So I move that the resolution be adopted.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Burrows.

SENATOR BURROWS: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I think at this time when an energy crisis is really coming before our nation we ought to look very seriously at closing any rail lines and this would impose a lot of hardships on these small communities along this rail line. The grain being shipped out will have to be trucked out rather than shipped by rail and losing the rail rates. The farmers will get a lower net price on the grain they ship out of these communities and their input cost will have to come in by truck rather than car, than coming in directly by rail, and this will increase the cost in these communities directly to the farmers affected. We are dealing with a national problem here of the railroads wanting to reduce their service back to the main lines whenever possible, and in this particular case in our district, the communities have voiced some interest in putting inputs and actually helping bringing those tracks back up to where they can be used. If we can delay it, we will give some opportunities for the communities to get together for our legislation that the Ag Committee introduced to help on this to see if we can't work something out that would make it possible to leave