

March 15, 1979

LB 94

On Page 19 lines 4 and 5, strike the new language and reinstate the stricken matter in lines 5 through 9.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, this sounds like the same amendment, but it is different. This amendment would not allow them to use again coffins that have been used once, but the portion of the language that would allow reuse of the shipping case, when paid for by public funds. You can look at the language. That would be reinstated. And I think some of you may have voted hastily, or refrained from voting hastily on the last offering by Senator Haberman. It's a strange thing that we will look at an industry which is hustling the public literally, and put into their hands an additional tool to do this type of reprehensible thing. How much is the rental of a coffin worth? Three hundred dollars...to let somebody be propped up there for a short time, and then dropped through the trapdoor? What some of you need to do is go to these funeral homes and see how they handle those that you think are given so much consideration. You ought to see the modern trap-pings of technology, the adding machines that they trot out to start totaling up the amount of the funeral. Some of you may be unaware of unauthorized embalming. These people, once they do these things, charge you for it. They don't want to give you an itemized list of what is contained in a service. I think that the funeral industry has to be viewed like any other money making enterprise in this society, but people are afraid to deal with it for two reasons. The first one would have to make them think about death and dying, but there is no way around that. Then, they're afraid because it has been made to be hooked up with concepts of religion, the after-life and what becomes of those who have departed here, and this is the last station and the undertaker is the stationmaster, and he's going to launch them on that last journey in style. That is pagan, and this type of provision which allows the reuse of coffins, I think, is barbaric. So what this amendment would do is to stop the gravediggers from using these coffins more than once. It would then reinstate the language and this is the language that would be reinstated: "Nothing in Section 71-1325 to 71-1338 shall be construed to prevent the reuse of a receptacle which is commonly known as a shipping case, when the service and receptacle is paid for from public funds." That's a concession. So I think you ought to adopt this amendment. And Mr. Chairman, I'm going to ask for a Call of the House, and a roll call vote on this proposition. I have a few more minutes and I've got to try to catch your attention, and appeal to those higher sensitivities that we all must have, or all must have had at some point. A very wise religion has adopted the policy that when people die they are all the same, that the most simple inexpensive means will be found to place that person into the ground. That prevents people without means