

March 26, 1979

LB 234

CLERK: Mr. President, I now have a series of amendments on LB 234. The first is offered by Senator Reutzel and Senator Landis, Mr. President. Would you like me to read those, Senator? The amendments read as follows: Read Reutzel and Landis amendments as found on page 1086, Legislative Journal.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Landis, do you want to speak to the amendment? Senator Reutzel.

SENATOR REUTZEL: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, these are the amendments that we were talking about last week when we adopted the committee amendments. I would like to have you carefully follow the amendments which are being passed out now. What we are doing, it is a very simple matter. There are questions of expanding the jurors list. This is what we had the two year interim study designed for, and out of this two years of study, out of the hearings we have had across the state, it has been apparent that there could be some revisions in the jury selection system. This is why we have LB 234. LB 234 as it now stands only gets rid of some of the exemptions that are now on the books and those exemptions being really nothing more than monuments to one lobbying group at one particular time. I don't think we found anyone in opposition to striking the majority of those amendments, the majority of those exemptions at any of the hearings we have had across the state and I sat in on many of those hearings in the two years we have had this study resolution. What we are attempting to do is to put back into the bill the main thrust of the bill and that is to expand the jury selection system and we are doing that in a couple of ways, one by lowering the age from 21 and also by expanding the list from which the names can be drawn from. Now the other day when we were arguing the committee amendments, there were some remarks on the floor, I think Senator Stoney said that no one appeared in favor of expanding the list, and I have a list here from the committee hearings. Judge Reagan appeared and he testified in favor of expanding that list using the drivers' licenses, and he said at the present time we select jurors only from the voter registration lists in the county and he thought that it should be expanded. Why should it be expanded? And he goes on to say, I suppose the answer to that is that a couple of times in the last three years I have had people called for jury service who have had no valid excuse, no qualified exemption, they have gotten so angry that they said, well, if the only way we can get on for jury duty is by voter registration, then I will just strike my name. I will cease