

March 27, 1979

LB 42

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I believe that Senator DeCamp has proposed the solution here. I think it's common knowledge that it's difficult enough to get the Department of Roads to move on some of these things let alone to tie all three of them together. I think we can address the problem of who has to pay what a little more directly in LB 103, Senator Cullan's bill, which deals with taxation. I think that anyone who has done any research at all recognizes that the railroads are, in effect, getting away with murder on the taxes they pay on their property, and I think that if we want to really address the situation we can start right there. I think Senator Carsten has done some looking into that, and if you think that I'm not telling the facts about that as they are, then you ought to do some checking with that. So I think the problem is not to try to negotiate separate agreements, but to come back through the Board of Equalization and demand that they pay their fair share of the taxes on their property as everyone else has to do. There is a great deal of equalization and a great deal of reappraisal at the present time of all kinds of property. If you've noticed the newspapers in the last few days, they've talked about how the reappraisal notices are going out and the County Assessor's offices are ringing. You can be sure that one person or one group that are not calling the County Assessor are the railroads, and the reason they're not is because they're getting away scot-free. I think that if you were to reappraise that railroad property at its true value, put it on the tax rolls for what it should be on the tax rolls, you wouldn't have to worry about whether or not the railroads are going to come in and nitpick over a few crossings. You could build them as they are being suggested that they be built by Senator DeCamp and you'd be much farther ahead clear across the state. So I suggest you adopt Senator DeCamp's proposal and move forward.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Cullan. Alright, then we're ready for Senator Dworak to close on his motion to reconsider. Senator Dworak.

SENATOR DWORAK: Mr. President and colleagues, I'm not going to belabor this, but I do have a little problem with Senator DeCamp's logic in the fact that the railroads are not, or are resistant, or are hesitant, to provide railroad crossings, therefore, let's just eliminate them, let's not give them any responsibility at all. We're directing these railroads to provide a certain amount of money for safety crossings. We all say that that's proper and right