

April 5, 1979

LB 101

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I will be very brief and I will deal with the specific and the bill. All Senator Newell wanted to do was change the name of the commission, yet the requirements of the bill will still be that six of the commission shall be hearing impaired and all members shall be familiar with the problems of the hearing impaired community in the State of Nebraska. At least four of the six hearing impaired persons, members, shall know manual communication. That is on the first page of the committee amendment which becomes the bill. Then if you go to section 9, the commission shall serve as the principal state agency responsible for advocating public policies and programs which shall improve the quality and coordination of existing services for the hearing impaired. Then in subdivision 1, inventory services available for meeting the problems of the hearing impaired and assist hearing impaired persons in locating and securing such services, maintain a list of persons qualified in the various types and so forth. Everything relates to the hearing impaired. If you do what Senator Newell is telling you to do, all you will have done is misname what this commission is about. If you are going to make it a commission for the disabled you have to list what constitutes a disability and by what definition you would determine that. Would be by a Social Security definition, an unemployment or Workmen Compensation definition or just what? I think that we ought not try to do this at this point and the perfect word, Senator Newell, was beguiling. It appears to be something on its face which it is not. It is a chimera. It is like the will-o'-the-wisp and the will-o'-the-wisp is that glowing something that you see if you are in a bog or a swamp. It is decaying vegetation and from a distance there appears to be a light and people follow this light and become more and more lost because when they reach the point where the light was they can no longer see the glow and that, I think, is what would happen here. If you look at what Senator Newell said from a distance it is beguiling. It seems desirable and seems to have merit but if you pursue it, that thing of it which seems to have value is elusive and you can never get your hand on it. This whole bill, this whole bill and the way it has been dealt with I think indicates how little sensitivity, some of it unintentional, exists toward the hearing impaired. What was the gathering of the committee called where this bill was to be discussed? It was called a hearing, yet the people who were there perhaps could not hear at all. It is similar to using the masculine even in those