

January 11, 1980

LB 399

I certainly cannot vote for this bill in this form.  
Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vickers. Senator Marsh, will you answer your phone please. Senator Vickers, you have the floor.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. President, members, I would like to ask a question of Senator Schmit, please. Senator Schmit, I notice the original title of this bill was the meat import law and I certainly applaud that as being a cattle producer and a pork producer, but in the title of the white amendment, the committee amendments, they use the term "comminuted" and I had to look it up in the dictionary to even see what it meant. I just raise them. I don't grind them up. I guess if I understand that correctly that is to make it small, pulverized, and like to make into powder. Now it seems to me this is changing the intent to quite some degree and I noticed in the committee hearing you had no small packing firms that came in and testified one way or the other. In your opinion, do you think that if the white copy was the one you were having a hearing on that you would have had a different set of people come into the hearing and perhaps heard from some of the small packers?

SENATOR SCHMIT: I think perhaps, Senator Vickers, we would have had a different assortment of witnesses. As I said, we have heard from a few of the people who would be affected by it, and as I pointed out before, this is a very difficult part of the law to work with, and at the time that we had the committee hearing, we felt that based upon the Michigan Supreme Court that the law was constitutional. Now in the intervening period of six months, there has been some federal comments to the contrary based upon some of the objections that Senator Simon has raised and I guess you can understand I am not that enthusiastic about the bill, but the point is that the language at the time that we adopted the committee amendments was considered to be satisfactory. At this point in time, there is legitimate concern about the ability to enact this kind of legislation.

SENATOR VICKERS: Thank you very much, Senator Schmit. My only concern is that, as I say, I am very much in favor of some method that would let the public know when they are getting good Nebraska or good United States meat as opposed to imported meat but I am very concerned that we might be enacting something here that would have a detrimental impact on some of our small packing plants within the State of Nebraska, which in turn would pass that impact onto us, the livestock producers. So that was the reason I was a