

opportunities that we do have. We have a number of good hunting areas out there but to answer some of the concerns raised by Senator Maresh and I hope Senator Maresh, if Senator Dworak would stop trying to get him to talk about his philosophical beliefs for just a minute, maybe Senator Maresh would listen a little bit. The concern raised by Senator Maresh and many of my rural friends concerning the opossum and raccoon, I certainly agree with and that was one of the first concerns that I had with LB 72 also. However, the language of LB 72 is, where it removes the raccoon and opossum from the game animal means that it has been in the game animal list all the time so we are not rechanging that except that we are putting it over in fur harvesting which is just simply another permit. The difference, however, in the statute in another section, in 37-201 there is an exception and I will read it for the body so that perhaps it will alleviate some of the concerns. And this is talking about hunting and fishing permits, when they are required and so forth and the exception is that it provide that any farmer or rancher owning or operating a farm or ranch may destroy or have destroyed any predator including raccoon and opossum preying on livestock or poultry or causing other agriculture depredation on lands owned or controlled by him without a permit issued by the Game and Parks Commission. So if that opossum is tearing off the shingles of your chicken house and getting in and eating the chickens or sucking the eggs, why go ahead and shoot him. I think Senator Maresh would like to comment on that so I would ask Senator Maresh if he would respond.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Are you asking him a question or what?

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask Senator Maresh a question.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Do you yield, Senator Maresh?

SENATOR VICKERS: Senator Maresh, if the provision that I just read to you, wouldn't that address the situation that you referred to as far as raccoons and opossums and the problems that they cause to farmers in this state?

SENATOR MARESH: Senator Vickers, I'm not concerned about the opossum because they don't cause the damage that the raccoons do to sweet corn and the shingles on the roofs and things like that but what I am concerned, if these young people or whoever it is wants to harvest the raccoon for the fur, they will not go to the expense of buying a license where now they can do it with just the hunting license and they are keeping the raccoon under control by going out raccoon hunting and by requiring them to buy a special permit to harvest the fur, I am afraid that