

April 8, 1981

LB 205

PRESIDENT: Senator Newell, did you wish to speak?

SENATOR NEWELL: Yes. Mr. President and members of the body, I think we have to understand just exactly what this amendment does, and I think it is simple. Basically, it says these arson investigators may wear weapons only during the investigation of a fire. That's what Senator Chambers is trying to put on there, only during that time. I don't know if he is proposing that they buckle and unbuckle their weapons if they go on coffee break or if they are doing paper work. But the bottom line is simply this, that only arson investigators may, in fact, wear these weapons. This is absolutely unnecessary. It clutters the bill. It is not necessary. Senator Marsh can say that she would support the bill. She has not. This does not improve the bill. It actually creates some additional doubts. These four individuals that we are talking about are full-time fire investigators...arson investigators. And...I'm getting a little flustered. I oppose the amendment. It is absolutely...you know how it goes, John. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers, you may close.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, the amendment does not say, "only during the investigation of a fire", it says, "during an arson investigation", whatever that term entails. And I don't see how in the world Senator Newell can say this amendment that limits the bill in this fashion can hurt it when he has argued that that is what the purpose of the bill is. Now, I think anybody who would accept Senator Newell's proposition as he stated it, is very foolish. Are you going to tell me that you think these men, 40 hours a week, or however many hours these people work, is spent... all that time is spent investigating arson? That is all they do? And if there is no suspected arson, then they don't do anything? They just sit home? If so, this shows that you don't need all that sales tax, Senator DeCamp. You've got people sitting around and the only time they work is if there is possibility of an arson. So while there are no fires to be investigated, these people are doing nothing. That is preposterous. I don't see how this amendment can hurt the bill at all. But, as I say, you are going to pass it, it appears to me. If you do pass it, I hope the Governor will veto it. And if he vetoes it, it certainly won't be done because he feels any fondness or affection toward me. It will be because he has read the bill and has seen the vast expansion of power that is being given to these people under all circumstances when any kind of fire or any type of investigation is being