

May 11, 1981

LB 234

that. So I would ask you to oppose the amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Newell.

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, are there many more speakers on this issue?

SENATOR CLARK: Yes, we have five more.

SENATOR NEWELL: Five more speakers. It may be appropriate to call the question and I would like to do that.

SENATOR CLARK: The question has been called for. Do I see five hands? I do. All those in favor of ceasing debate vote aye. All those opposed nay.

CLERK: Senator Clark voting aye.

SENATOR CLARK: Record the vote.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 10 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SENATOR CLARK: Debate is ceased. Senator Fowler, do you wish to close?

SENATOR FOWLER: Mr. President, several times on the floor this year Vard Johnson has stood up and given us some economics lessons and I very much appreciate those. One of the things he has talked about is to realize that we live in inflationary economy, in inflationary society and to try and adjust our psychology accordingly and it gets to the point that on many of these benefit levels that if you do not adjust them some small amount for inflation, in fact, then you have reduced them and there is no way it seems that we can automatically index these things to the cost of living and, therefore, we have to come in and pick a dollar amount and try and adjust it. Essentially that is all we are doing with this amendment and, in fact, it is probably less than an inflationary adjustment, less than an actual indexing. If we had an automatic cost of living, automatic CPI adjustment, these things would be going on just higher, at a higher level than we are talking about here. So I don't think we are even keeping up with the rate of inflation as far as the benefits. I think Senator Dworak has addressed some of the questions about the need for equity in this system. We have asked employees to surrender a certain right. To sue we have set up an administrative system and an insurance system and I think we have to maintain some equity. Nebraska is very low as far as what it pays as the maximum benefit versus the average weekly wage. Most states are above the average weekly wage. Nebraska is