

CLERK: Mr. President, the first bill for discussion by the Legislature is LB 313. It was introduced by Senator McFarland on January 10 of last year. (Read title.) The bill was introduced, as I say, on January 10 last year, referred to Business and Labor, was advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments pending by the Business and Labor Committee. (See page 688 of the Legislative Journal.)

PRESIDENT: Senator Coordsen, please.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, and members of the body. I will address the committee amendments and I would ask if you would turn to LB 313 in your bill book if you are interested. LB 313, as originally introduced, contained an increase in workers' compensation weekly benefit from the current \$245 to \$290, which would have been effective this last fall. As many of you might remember, every time this issue and the concurrent unemployment increases come up, there is quite a large amount of difference between what those who are paying think is fair and those that are receiving think is fair. The committee amendment that we are addressing now contains two elements. One is a change in the weekly benefit from what is contained in 313 in that, bear in mind the current rate is 245, that on the effective date of this act, which would be in July of 1990, the weekly benefit rate would be raised to \$255, and on July 1, 1991, next year, the weekly rate would be raised another \$10 to \$265. Also included in the committee amendment is LB 986, which we heard in Business and Labor Committee. LB 986 is a bill that addresses a growing concern in the business community in that while the weekly compensation rates may be comparable to other states, across the United States the premium increases have been substantial to pay for the medical payment side in addition to the weekly benefit section. There were a number of people in the business community that felt that were they to be allowed a deductible on their workers' compensation insurance that the increases in premium might well be more bearable to them. So LB 986 with some further amendments that are contained within the committee amendment by the Workers' Compensation Court provides that for each workers' compensation policy that is issued in the State of Nebraska, they shall offer at the option of the employer a deductible in increments of \$500, beginning with a deductible of 500 and going to a deductible of 2,500. The committee was concerned that in doing this that there was no impact upon the coverage of employees,