

March 13, 1990

LB 247
LR 239

SENATOR WESELY: ...for many years in the future.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Barrett, followed by Senator Langford, then Senator Schmit.

SENATOR BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. President, and members. As I think all of you know, I have been somewhat hesitant at least in the past three and a half years to become deeply embroiled in the debate on the floor to any great degree. That is a personal choice that I made. It is by design and not by accident because of the nature of the Office of Speaker. Nevertheless, there are issues in which I do feel strongly about, issues in which I happen to be a co-sponsor. This happens to be one of those issues. I was also privileged to be a member of the 247 Study Committee which looked at this issue over a considerable period of time. That group worked very hard. The consultants that did address the issue were exceptional, in my opinion. During that period of time, there were three, in the last 30 years, I should say, we found out that there have been three studies, major studies in this state concerning the coordination of higher education, and all three of these studies have told us the same thing, that we needed to start working together. In our institutions of higher learning, we needed better effective coordination. Three years ago the New Horizons process, which was initiated by this Legislature, went out across the state and talked to citizens, over 2,000 of them. It was quite interesting to me to note that one of the priority items brought to us by citizens across this state was the need for more effective coordination of higher education. From that, incidentally, was LB 247 of last year, and from that, frankly, is where we are today with 239CA. It is apparent, as I said at the hearing on this issue, that the coordination of higher education in this state is lacking, is sadly lacking. Where is it? Senator Landis, I don't have a real good answer for your question about protecting the flower. I liked what you said about needing change. I believe a direct quote, "We need change in this state." In terms of the resources and the research at UNL, I think probably the answer ultimately lies with this body. If that...if UNL is to continue to be an education of excellence in terms of research and development, that ball lies right in the hands of this Legislature it seems to me. Is this Legislature going to be willing to continue a major commitment to UNL in terms of research and development? I certainly hope so because, as Senator Wesely said, it is a state institution and we do have a feeling for UNL. We truly do, all of us. I