

The letter goes on to say, "Ak-Sar-Ben will be at stake and more and more the horse-racing industry is in trouble. Ak-Sar-Ben may sell the track, that's a guess, but if they close the track, they could sell it as well." And then he says, "Please turn over. Please, I am frustrated and worry. I need someone to write to you. Yours sincerely." So we do have people, even in Senator Chambers' district, that works at the track that are counting on that job and this young man or old man has said that's the only job I have. And, of course, if we would have done what I asked for a year or two ago and had built the convention center for the City of Omaha out at Ak-Sar-Ben, they wouldn't be asking for a tax break because I'm sure there would have been enough money there to keep the track going. As Senator Hall mentioned, there are shows that many, many people throughout the state enjoyed at Ak-Sar-Ben. Because they lost money on the shows, they had to close down the shows and I know that's very disappointing to myself too because I enjoyed the shows more than I did the horse racing. So I urge you to vote for the committee amendments. And, Senator Chambers, I am so happy to say that the pickles, the bingo and the race track are now all running together. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I wish we could go back a few years and I think most of us wish we could go back a few years, go back to the...go back to the eighties when horse racing was flourishing. But it isn't anymore. The horse-racing business has more competition. We have new tracks in Minnesota and Iowa. Another one is opening in Kansas City and so you can see there is a lot more competition and also competition from the lottery in Iowa and other forms of gambling. But I want to get off of the Ak-Sar-Ben deal a little bit and talk about the other race tracks, the smaller tracks like in Grand Island and Columbus and in Dakota County, and I think there's one more, and in Lincoln here too. I guess we consider Lincoln a smaller track than Ak-Sar-Ben. But these race tracks do a lot of good for the community that they're located in. I know up in northeast Nebraska we have the Atokad race track and they have all kinds of different events, many of them, and most of them are related to agriculture. And this is what I like to see because during these agriculture events they have to have some large place to have them, where there's plenty of parking and also livestock facilities. And so they do a lot of good. They do a lot of