

engrossed. (See pages 922-23 of the Legislative Journal.)

Madam President, back to LB 297, I have nothing further on the bill at this time.

PRESIDENT MOUL: We will proceed to debate the bill, itself, 297, Senator Hall has had opening on it. Are there any senators who wish to debate the motion to advance LB 297 to E & R. Seeing none, do you have closing, Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Madam President. The issue is...I think was fairly debated on the amendment offered by and fairly offered by Senator Coordsen. The purpose was to delay the impact. The delay has been there. There has been the benefit, I think, of a full year of not having the impact take effect for this small group of employers to pay those individuals who fall under the state minimum wage requirement. The issue of phasing it in, and those employees who have to train people, are provided for in terms of the training wage. The training wage is much lower and it is allowed for for up to 90 days. If they happen to be a seasonal employer, that could potentially be fully one-half of the season that they are open, or at a minimum, a third. They are covered under this. They are taken care of in that training wage. We did not try to wipe that out. We mirrored that language in terms of protecting those individuals who have to constantly train employees. They are taken care of. Ladies and gentlemen, I asked the accounting office for some information and I just said, what do we pay our own Pages? And they happen to be individuals who would fall under a minimum wage, they happen to be seasonal employees, if you will, and, currently, we pay them \$4.20 an hour, excuse me, \$4.27 an hour. I had better correct that before the Clerk looks at me like that again. I think they are worth every penny we pay them and I think they work very hard. They are here. They do a good job. They are timely. They are professional in their approach to their positions, as I think most employees are that would be under the state minimum wage. It is fair, it is appropriate the state minimum wage be at a decent level. All LB 297 does is put it into effect at \$4.25 effective July 1. It is a fair and direct approach to a problem that is out there. I would argue that I don't think that you have to worry about the employers in your districts being upset. I think if you don't support this you have to worry about what you are doing to the employees who would fall under a lesser wage scale than somebody who is across the street and who just happens to be working for