

SENATOR SMITH: I will do the best I can, Mr. Speaker. Again, what I will do is just tell you that I can't argue against the points that have been made on the floor by Senators Withem and Senator Nelson. I know she was taken by surprise. It's not a real great thing to do but I would have guessed that...I mean, I would have thought that they would have been in touch with the tracks before this time. I know that I, personally, did get in touch with my track and Senator Schellpeper was in touch with his tracks, so those two tracks, at least, were aware of it. And, again, I can't argue. I can tell you that your argument about the fact that it did not have a public hearing is a legitimate one. I stated that when I rose, the very first thing I said was I'm not going to try to tell you that this did have a public hearing because it didn't. And I will also tell you that they did tell me about their concern for their budget before the session began this year and I would not deal with it. I wouldn't talk with them about it. And I told them, go someplace else if you want help. Let some other senator that you have been benefiting, basically, because I...I'll be real open with all of you on the floor, I feel that the track in Hastings has taken it in the shorts, if you want to call it that, ever since I've been here. In the seven years that I've been here, they've never gotten anything. And so I'm not really sympathetic to the racing industry in the state. But the truth of the matter is they do have a regulatory responsibility. They must have a budget in order to function. And the very people who are complaining, the racing...or the horsemen right now who just came in and told us about this concern, and I realize they didn't know much about it before either but still those people, this is for their protection that we have the regulatory responsibility placed here in this...in the Racing Commission. If you didn't have that, you would have havoc in the racing industry in Nebraska, probably. Again, this is not my issue. I'm doing it as Chairman of the committee because I was convinced when I sat down, went through the budget with them, saw that they legitimately do have a need to be able to regulate. They've got to be able to have money to continue their operations. And, based on that, the only thing I can tell you is I was told that they go before the Appropriations Committee with their request, after I turned them down originally and that was not the appropriate place, they were told they should try to come and see if they could get it attached to some bill which they did then come back to me again. So, based on all these things, and again my apologies to