

the part of Senator Wickersham and myself and the other members of this Legislature but on the part of the Governor. And I can tell you and I think you may already know that the Governor has been very active and very supportive and has had conversations with officials of the Chicago Northwestern Railway, and that we had hoped that those negotiations had...would have been completed by this time. Unfortunately, they are not. But the Governor is not anxious to put state money into the line and I can understand that. There is a possibility of a fairly long-term lease-purchase option at a very low rate which is appealing. Now let me just tell you my druthers about this. See, there is a railroad with seven...about nine or ten million dollars worth of scrap iron. The net salvage value of that railroad is somewhere in the order of nine or ten million dollars. So my position is that we cannot go ahead and let this go by the boards, that the state...this is a great deal as far as I'm concerned for the state. If the state did put some money in it, they could put up several million dollars and still be secured because of the salvage value. And we do have, to get to it more specifically, we have had a number of people interested in operating the line. They have come from Iowa. They have come from South Dakota, and there has been a Nebraska group that definitely is interested in operating the line.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Okay, thank you. I have one other question that I think is important, at least from my point of view, and that is with regards to the policy issues here. The policy would be that the state...this is a vital line, one that's viable, the one that's worth salvaging and operating, what message does that send to the other operators of rail lines in this state that may have a line, a short line or lines that are losing money, lines that they would like to get rid of? Does the message get sent to them that says, look, why don't we downsize this? Why don't we cut our traffic on this? Why don't we start to build our numbers to show that this line is no longer a viable line and we file our intent to abandon because we know the state is going to come buy a line that we probably couldn't peddle...

SPEAKER BAACK PRESIDING

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: ...anywhere else and we'd just have to sell it for scrap; here's our chance to get out from under this