

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Senator Wickersham, you passed out a letter just a few minutes ago that I guess has me a little confused as I just got down and started to read this after listening to some of the other ones. And what it says to me here is that we reject your May 21 counter offer and then they go down and say that the best courses for the state and the Northwestern to terminate the negotiations, that kind of, I mean, after I read this letter I kind of walk away saying is this a moot point that we're not even doing it? And could you kind of help me out with that letter?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: All right. Quite frankly, we have been unable to analyze that letter fully and determine what it means. I can tell you that the negotiations for the acquisition of this line have been difficult at best. They have taken more turns than you can ever imagine and this seems to me to be simply one more turn. I cannot tell at the present time whether this is the final word from the C&NW or simply a part of their negotiating strategy. It is...it is surprising, to say the least, and if you saw my copy of the fax transmission, you would see that it came in at three twenty-five this afternoon. We met in the Governor's office on May 21st and reached what we considered to be an agreement for the acquisition of the line. And you have a letter from the Governor or memorandum from the Governor setting out that understanding. And then today at three twenty-five we received the subsequent letter that we have distributed to you. We simply do not know what it means. At this point, I'm not at all certain that it does mean that the negotiations are done. In fact, I suspect that they are not done. But it certainly has produced some question in my mind concerning the good faith of the C&NW and in the prior negotiations.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you. I think that you probably hit the nail right on the head. I have had some concern about the way the Chicago Northwestern has treated that line. After the hearing, I think the people in your districts have really had some...just some difficult dealings with these people. I think they purposely downsized that line and done those things and that's beyond the control of the citizens of the State of Nebraska and it's beyond your constituents' control and they've put your constituents in no other position other than to fight for their life to save that line. And that's not the constituents' problem. Well, ultimately it is but they didn't