

May 28, 1991

LB 783A, 783

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you. I agree that I think we have had a more than adequate discussion of the bill, and I think everybody knows what the purposes are, and the benefits that can accrue to the State of Nebraska if we make this investment of \$5 million. And I imagine that there is still some question in the back of your minds about the two letters that were placed on your desk today, and I will reiterate that I don't know what to make of those, but at a meeting in the Governor's Office on the 21st, we clearly had an agreement in principle with the C&NW for the acquisition of the Norfolk to Chadron segment of the line, and today they are indicating that we don't. I think that falls in line with something that Senator Chambers was asking about earlier, and that is whether or not the C&NW folks really intend to operate a line for profit or exactly what their motives are. We received a letter today at three twenty-five saying negotiations were off. I don't think that that timing was a coincidence, and in part today I want to ask you to advance this bill and 783A so that we can continue to negotiate with them and, hopefully, arrive at some solution by the time it comes up on General File. If nothing else, I think that we are clearly in a position to contest abandonment of the line, and we'll need 783, in part, as a vehicle for doing that, whether that is done by the State of Nebraska or is done by shippers organizations or other interested citizens. It does not seem to me that the C&NW has dealt with the Legislature or the Governor's Office in any more effective or fair way than they have worked in the past with the shippers. And I would just urge the advancement of 783.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. I would remind the senators that we are under call and a roll call vote has been requested by Senator Chambers. Senator Beutler, Senator Warner, Senator Smith, would you please check in. Senator Moore. Senator Abboud and Senator Horgan, please check in. Mr. Clerk, please proceed with the roll call vote.

ASSISTANT CLERK: (Roll call vote taken. See page 2542 of the Legislative Journal.) The vote is 29 ayes, 17 nays, Madam President.

PRESIDENT MOUL: LB 783 advances. I will raise the call. LB 783A.