

February 18, 1992 LB 1061

not here during Senator Robak's presentation, but if she did not mention that, the Columbus track has never had a representative, per se, from that area on the commission, notwithstanding the fact that Columbus is probably known as the best and most enthusiastic supporter of thoroughbred racing of any community in the State of Nebraska. It is sort of like Saunders County being the Soybean Capital, I guess, due to the fact that the VanBergs, I think, have done more for thoroughbred racing in Nebraska than any other family. M. H. VanBerg is a member of the Racing Hall of Fame, trainers Racing Hall of Fame. His son, Jack, still very active today, is also a member. To the best of my knowledge, it is probably the only father-son members of that Racing Hall of Fame, and certainly it has done a lot to promote the thoroughbred industry here in Nebraska. I think we have to recognize that thoroughbred racing is on hard times in the state, and as has been pointed out many times on this floor by others than myself, that thoroughbred breeding, racing is an integral part of Nebraska and Nebraska agriculture. And I think that to add two additional members to the commission would emphasize that Nebraska is going to fight back and that we are going to seek to maintain and improve our position in thoroughbred racing here in the state. If we do so, we can look for increased revenue from the industry, increased revenue from thoroughbred breeding, and increased interest, in general, in what has been known as the king of sports. I know that there will continue to be those who say, well, racing is on its way out. I don't think that is true. I think that simulcasting has aided racing in Nebraska. I think that we have seen some things turn around in the last year, and we have seen management at the tracks take a new aggressive attitude, and we have seen renewed interest among the breeder groups, and I think all of those things are good. I think then, of course, it is imperative that we have the strongest, most active, Racing Commission that we can possibly have and that each and every area of the state be represented on that commission, so that the interests of the entire state are truly represented fairly and equitably. I support the Robak amendment.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Schmit. Senator Robak, followed by Senators Hartnett, Nelson, and Schellpeper.

SENATOR ROBAK: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Senator, I think maybe it was Senator Schellpeper said that they got little support in community (sic) and only one person opposed the bill. That was only because there was only one