

February 27, 1996 LR 46

the general population. Senator L.B. Murphy, who was a long ago predecessor of mine, was one of the cosponsors on both amendments. It's been something that people in Scotts Bluff County have been looking at for quite some time. There's been several reports that have been done in looking at county government and why it should have a change, and I think it's timely; with looking at the property tax issue, restructuring government, and things we want to do, to look at some of those studies that were done. And a report of the Nebraska Legislative Council on the Reorganization of County Government to the Nebraska Legislative Council in 1950, it was determined that the functions of any government should be arranged on a logical and consistent basis and the corresponding powers and responsibilities should be assigned to clearly identifiable departments and officials. The county, however, presents many examples of illogical allocation of functions and of diffusion of powers and responsibilities. The powers of the county government are divided among the board of commissioners or supervisors and a number of miscellaneous elective officers with little or no provision for coordination at the top or responsibility to any common authority. The report also comments of the division of powers and the responsibilities saying one recognized authority on this subject has said, the government structures established in the three thousand odd counties of the United States closely resemble one another in one important respect--they violate, almost without exception, every sound principle of organization. They are headless and formless. Authority is scattered among a large number of elected county officers who usually pursue their separate ways with little or no thought of effective cooperation. No one person corresponding to the mayor or manager of a city or the governor of the state exercises supreme executive power. No one person can be held responsible for the lack of coordinated administration. Even the so-called legislative body of the county has very limited legislative powers and can determine county policies only within certain narrowly limited fields. This same authority, who is Austin F. Macdonald, of American state government administration, adds that the chief and most obvious defect in the organization of county government is the lack of a responsible executive. The League of Women Voters of Nebraska also released a publication in 1990 as a result of a study of specific aspects of government. I have a handout that was placed on your desk that has some excerpts from this study that I would like to have you look over if you could in your

11598