

changes to the constitution by way of petition, they ought to be given what they want for a change. Let them have what they want. Sometimes a crisis has to be reached and passed. That's what old Abraham Lincoln said. He and I are about the same age now, so I feel that I can kind of make that comment. But in reality the Legislature is always jumping and scrambling every time somebody says that they're going to circulate a petition. Let them circulate it, let them put a restriction on what the state can spend, and then we will live under that restriction, and they will come to understand the significance and meaning of it. If we forever treat the public like juveniles, always try to protect them from themselves, then the Legislature is never going to be able to function as a policymaking body in the way that it should. I don't personally think these petitions are going to go anywhere, but what if they do? Suppose the Legislature does all the things that we have been doing, passing laws that we don't feel adequately address the problem, but hoping that it's enough to forestall these petitions, and the petitions pass anyway, they get enough signatures. They put the propositions on the ballot and the people vote for them. All of this time that has been spent by the Legislature is wasted. I think it's wasted anyway. These bills are just smoke screens; they're designed to give the impression and appearance that something is being done when it's not. Too many times when education is discussed, and Senator Beutler's amendment would dedicate some money for that purpose, what is envisioned by most people is increased salaries for teachers, increased benefits, maybe you'll talk eventually about more schools, more items and objects, but very little is said about what the children actually learn in the schools. I think instead of talking about a competency test statewide for the students, if you want to really hear a cry from the banshees, we should talk about a competency test for teachers statewide. And I wouldn't be unreasonable. I would do the same thing that one of the southern states did. I would say that the level of competency involved in this test is the eighth grade level and, even saying that the test is at eighth grade level, we would have an outcry. I got a circular, and I'm sure all the rest of you did, from the teachers union, the NSEA or OS...maybe it's the Omaha branch. And they misspelled canvass. They were talking about canvassing something or other in the sense of examining or totaling the number of votes, and they spelled it one S, that relates to this type of fabric. So if those whose union represents the teachers will put out a publication, I'm sure intended primarily for