

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 22, 1999 LB 150

or the appropriate line to that school, and any school in this state that can't get the Internet is a breakdown in the marketplace and I will not stand up and endorse ringingly a private sector that will not bring the Internet to the schools of this state, and that's happening. These are also private sector companies that are making 30 and 40 percent profit while they refuse to take the Internet to some schools. That is unconscionable. In Norfolk, where they want to...they have the use of a fiber optic, which is a public asset done by NFPD and they tried to offer the facilities up there, which was the source of the controversy, to a metropolitan...to a community college, I believe, and several other public uses, the price for that service was \$5,000. The private sector price, which was run for exactly the same set of services, was \$47,000. I do not endorse grocery stores that gouge their prices and I don't endorse private companies who are making 20, 30, and 40 percent profits gouging to the tune of 9 times the value of those services when there's a public asset available. Which is why Senator Bromm was awfully smart in finding some language that both Jon Bruning and I could agree to. That's pretty, pretty good, because we are on mirror image opposites of this point of view. There are times when the market breaks down and the telephone industry right now has at least a number of circumstances I can think of when the marketplace is not well-served, and if the public entity is available it should step forward. We had that happen in the thirties with electrical current in this state and the Rural Electrification Act brought cooperatives to bring electricity to farms when the private companies wouldn't go there because it wasn't profitable. You have telephone companies sitting on 30 percent profit rates that won't take Internet to schools. That's unconscionable and that is something that is broken and deserves to be fixed.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, since Senator Bruning has become more talkative and chatty on the floor, I'm going to engage him in a little discussion if he's willing to yield to a question or two.