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Transcriber's Office

April 23, 1999 LB 78

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Redfield. Further discussion on AM1453 to LB 78, Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Before I talk to Senator Bruning again, I would like to ask Senator Redfield a question.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Redfield.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Redfield, based on your last comment about keeping the rates low for the ratepayers in Omaha, is that what this bill is primarily aimed to do, to keep the rates low for ratepayers in Omaha?

SENATOR REDFIELD: I believe that what this is doing is trying to keep the competition on an even playing field and, by doing that, I believe it will keep the rates lower for the people in Omaha.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But it's really not your primary concern to keep the rates low for ratepayers in Omaha, is it? That's not your primary interest in the bill, is it?

SENATOR REDFIELD: I have several concerns. One is that water is not used to underwrite competition or an unfair competition in natural gas rates, and the other is the fact that the safety issue of the double piping. I think that we need to, just as we approach any kind of urban sprawl, that we're very effective and careful in the way we do it, and I think that piping being an issue, that certainly can affect the safety of the people involved in any digging situation. I think it's important that we do that.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Well, why couldn't we eliminate the possibility of double piping by saying that a utility which has a certain amount of piping will have the exclusive right to run piping into outlying areas? Why can't we do that, and we'd have no double piping? Why don't we do it that way?