

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

March 13, 2000 LB 1214, 1217

services to, but I would say that somewhat we are reaping what has been sown over many, many years for not having an adequate public health financing system. Also, the federal reimbursement rate for Medicaid, because Nebraska's economy is fairly strong, was less than had been projected. The other issue is that child care expenses have skyrocketed and part of that has to do with us going to paying for child care at 185 percent of poverty, which was a decision that was made, I believe, to make sure that our welfare reform really worked, but it was also made without much opportunity for us to have a way to control the cost other than by eliminating people from the program, and that was a huge growth in a fairly short period of time. And there are some things that we'll be talking about later in terms of the child care portion of it, the deficit, and how we might control those costs. The third piece is the cost of our lawsuits. The Wyoming lawsuit has drug on for 13 years. We have spent about \$20 million for those costs. We are just now beginning to start paying for the costs of the water lawsuit with Kansas and the low-level nuclear waste lawsuit, and these lawsuits and the cost that I'm talking about here are only the costs of pursuing the lawsuits or defending ourselves in the lawsuits, not for any potential awards that might come if we were found...if we lose the lawsuits. So those have the potential to have enormous impact on our budget in addition to the impact that they're having in a deficit sense. Those are the three major items. There's some other items that have been mentioned. Senator Chambers has been talking about the Wilderness Camp. That was...that was a piece that was initiated under...in the previous administration and was actually to have gone forward without...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR BROWN: ...the Legislature being involved in whether or not we were going to make the decision about funding it. It is an issue that we spent a lot of time in committee discussing and it probably is more appropriate to discuss it on LB 1217, but it was our conclusion that since we were dealing with such overcrowding at Kearney that this was a reasonable alternative to look at and I'm sure that the rest of the committee would be glad to spend a lot of time talking about it because we certainly spent a lot of time within committee talking about it.