

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

March 13, 2000 LB 1217

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Bohlke, on the committee amendments to LB 1217.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Mr. President and members. In a moment, Senator Brown, I want to ask you some questions. But I come back to the discussion last year on the floor, when we were discussing child support payments and the disbursement. Senator Baker, Senator Janssen, Senator Kristensen and myself worked on an amendment that we thought would serve just as well, if not better, by leaving it with the county attorneys, not hiring the people centrally, and actually putting it through the Treasurer's Office. We were told at that time (a) it wasn't a good idea, but certainly not putting it through the Treasurer's Office, and part of the reason was if we didn't have it done by last October, we were going to be sanctioned and have to pay a penalty. At that same time, Senator Brown, I talked about the number of people hired in Iowa, compared to the number of people that we were hiring to service the constituents who would have a problem in Nebraska and said, pointed out, if you divided up the numbers, there would be no way that the people calling in from Nebraska that they could service the number of calls that they would be getting. Again, I was told that that was the amount of money that we had present to hire that number of people. Okay, here we are, March 13th. As I understand it, (a) we're going to put it through the Treasurer; (b) we're going to still have the same amount of people we were talking about; but (c) we're going to pay \$3.6 million in a penalty, in a fine because we're late, which then brings me back to (d), my question as to where we were last session. And I don't understand it. And I also do not understand, or I think I could begin to understand how many people we could have hired for \$3.6 million in central administration to whoever was going to service the constituents who are going to be calling in with questions. I think that no one disagreed last year with the discussion on the floor as to the number of phone calls each one of those people would have to answer. That there would be absolutely no way there were enough people in that budget to service those calls. It seems to me this is obviously a mess, but it also seems to me that the whole premise last year, that people were resisting any idea of doing something differently, was because we were going to face the sanction and we were going to cause the state to be penalized. And I'll give Senator Janssen the remainder of my time, and then