

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

March 14, 2000 LB 1348

offered probably has no opposition and I will not prolong the discussion at this point. And thank you, again, Senator Dierks, for your eagle eye.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Wehrbein, on the Chambers amendment to the committee amendments to LB 1348.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. I support Senator Chambers' amendment. The Microenterprise adjustment, which is really what his does is something we have thought out carefully in years past in LB 327 and I'm a little hesitant to tinker with that because the body made that decision at that time at 50 percent, but certainly I don't oppose going to 25 percent, if that's the will of the body. So I would be supportive on that. I simply want to say I don't know when the best time is to discuss some of these issues, some of the issues that Senator Chambers raised. One of the reasons I have this bill is because I believe the rural economy in rural Nebraska needs a jump-start. We're putting 150 to 160 million dollars a year in LB 775. That does have statewide implications but it's certainly not targeted to rural Nebraska. This bill targets rural Nebraska primarily, although it's not targeted specifically to counties. It can be anywhere there's a successful idea that's being promoted. And it was my sense that this is a way to help rural Nebraska make the adjustments. I could stick my neck out and say that I think we're in a huge transition in the next five years, maybe up to 10 years, in Nebraska agriculture. I've had several experiences and comments and conversations in the last few days which leads me to believe that things are happening even faster than we imagine in here in terms of those that are going to be leaving the land. There's older farmers, and I'm going to say that that's my definition here of 55 and up, are leaving the land rapidly, to get their assets out of agriculture while they still have some value. I hesitate to do this, but I'm predicting we're going to see huge farms succeed, be the succeeding surviving agriculture situation in just a few years in Nebraska. That means a lot of people are going to have to leave the land. Not going to be able to stop it, economics being what they are. There's not going to be young farmers to take over and there's not going to be the capital available to do that except from large outside