

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

March 23, 2004      LB 1231

have been working on this for over a year, on various ways of trying to get some veterans cemeteries construction started in Nebraska. And of course, at the present time there has to be private funding in order to get the construction started. If there is enough private funding to get them started, somewhere around \$150,000 to \$200,000 per cemetery, then, from then on, there are federal government grants that will finish the job and, of course, pay back the start-up money that is used to start these cemeteries. Of course, by doing this, my understanding is we have a type of operation that will have control over these cemeteries and be able to fund them and do the work and take care of them. Alliance has already started some fund-raising on their cemetery out there. There began here a while back to proceed to have some fund-raisers in that part of the country and have some work begun on the fund-raising. It's always a long, hard haul like this to raise private funds for endeavors of this size. But I'm sure we'll all prevail. Senator Hartnett, of course, has been working for a cemetery in the Sarpy County area. It isn't...there aren't enough veterans in the Omaha area to be qualified for a federal cemetery, so they will go with the state cemetery. And at the present time, the one in Grand Island is used mostly for people that are living in the veterans' home at Grand Island. And of course, we have Fort McPherson, which is probably the one that the federal cemetery in...down by North Platte or by...along Interstate 80, if any of you stop there, why, it's a...my understanding is it's a mini Arlington Cemetery. It's very nice. And this is the plan that we were considering to build the other cemeteries on that order. So this is the beginning of some work that we hope will be successful and will bring some veterans cemeteries to Nebraska. At the present time, we're certainly getting more veterans all the time. There's a lot of veterans that are interested in having veterans cemeteries. At the present time, the federal government would like to have a veterans cemetery located so that no one has to drive more than 75 miles for a veterans cemetery. And I think with this plan that's being started here, why, Nebraska can be one of the leaders in getting this type of operation done. So I...I'll support the amendments, and I also support Senator Hartnett's bill. Thank you.