

February 10, 1971

(Machine not operating for first part of consideration of LB84)

SENATOR : The amendment suggested and proposed by Senator Morgan, is of course, in perfect order, I mean he has the privilege to do this as I would in the same circumstances and the only thing I want to point out is that this amendment which Senator Morgan proposes was also proposed and offered in the committee hearing. Now this amendment was turned down in the committee hearings, I believe the vote was 7 to 1, Senator Carpenter can verify this I believe and this was the same amendment. The objection that I have to the amendment is just simply this. I want to be as brief as I can because we have 14 new members in this Legislature who were not familiar with this. Of necessity I have to explain some background of this bill. In the 1967 Legislature authorized an Interim Study Committee of which I eventually became chairman to study the problems of the increasing rate of crime and also matters of juvenile delinquency rehabilitation and juvenile problems. We did then in accordance with that, set up a study committee and this was a unanimous recommendation. The bill that I offered in 1969 session was a result of this study committee and was recommended unanimously by the study committee, not by me, the committee introduced it and the bill was passed. Now this sets up a division of the Department of Institutions for the handling of the problems of juvenile delinquency. Now this is where I think Senator Morgan, not having this background probably had a more limited view of the problem than was intended to be covered by the bill which we passed in 1969. This is not a problem of Kearney or Geneva. Now this is what Judge letter refers to, this is what Mr. Cutak circulated a letter here to talk about how well the thing is going under the present management and so on. Kearney and Geneva are only a small part, a fractional part of the overall juvenile delinquency problem in the state and it should hardly have to be pointed out to members of this Legislature. You all have the same problem in your communities. I have it in mine, you have it in yours. Now in 1968, there were nearly 3,000 cases of juvenile delinquency problems that came before the juvenile court in Lancaster alone. In my county, in Gage County the problem has jumped from 30 to 40 a year to around 300 a year, and it's still growing. Now Kearney and Geneva, Kearney has only about 125 persons there at the present time 150, I don't know when we were there, there were 170 there. But at any rate, the number of people who are committed to the juvenile institutions is relatively small in comparison with this overall juvenile problem. Now what I intend to do, or what we intend to do under this bill, is set up a separate division and place Kearney and Geneva under a deputy director in the Department of Institutions. There's one other thing that's very essential to the explanation of this and this you have to understand. For nearly 100 years all of the