

## LB221

## into the 80s

## Senators see no obstacles for LB221

By Gordon Johnson

In these so-called bad and uncertain times, one thing seems certain: passage of LB221. Whether or not this is bad may depend on whether one is older than 20.

A strong opponent to the bill that would raise the drinking age to 20, said passage of LB221 seems imminent and that he is considering adding two amendments to the bill.

Omaha Sen. Peter Hoagland said he is considering supporting an amendment to the bill that would make it legal for anyone who can show they have registered for the draft to drink.

Hoagland used the same argument in support of this amendment as the one used years ago during efforts to lower the voting age from 21 to 18.

"It seems to me that if people are old enough to make the supreme sacrifice for their country, they should be old enough to drink," Hoagland said.

An amendment like this also would give teenagers an incentive for registering for the draft, Hoagland said.

"It will encourage our teenagers to be law-abiding citizens," he said.

Another amendment being considered by Hoagland is one that would make it illegal to draft Nebraskans who

are considered minors under Nebraska law.

## To make a point

Hoagland smiled when he said no one younger than 20 would be eligible for the draft with this amendment.

Hoagland admits that these amendments may not get enough support to be passed, but that he might propose the amendments just to make a point about the bill.

With or without the amendments, Hoagland said the bill has enough support to pass.

"It doesn't sound like there will be any chance of getting a weakening of LB221," he said.

LB221, introduced by Sen. Ralph Kelly of Grand Island last year, marched from General File, to Select File and then to Final Reading this year. Kelly's attempts at passage last year were quashed when some of his supporters went to lunch instead of waiting to vote on the bill.

This year the bill was amended while in General File through the efforts of Sens. Hoagland and Donald Dworak of Columbus. The Dworak-Hoagland amendment would make it legal for 19- and 20-year-olds to drink alcohol in supervised settings and buy alcohol in bars, but would not allow them to buy package alcohol.

## DeCamp amendment

After the bill went to Select File, Neligh Sen. John

DeCamp introduced an amendment to make the legal drinking age 20. Kelly supported the DeCamp amendment.

However, Hoagland said that even a watered-down version of the original bill will not be effective in cutting down the number of teenage drinkers.

Hoagland said he thinks today's society is much more permissive than it was when the drinking age was reduced to 19 in the early 1970s.

"We are not going to reverse nine years of fundamental societal change by playing around with the drinking age," Hoagland said.

Hoagland said he thought that the revised bill would receive passage when it comes to Final Reading. A main reason he said he thinks it will pass is because it is an election year.

"If this were not an election year there would not be a change in the drinking age at all," he said.

However, Kelly said he disagrees that the elections have anything to do with the bill's success or failure.

## 'We generation'

He said passage of the bill will come partly because people have realized they must be concerned with the welfare of others.

"I think the me generation has graduated and the we generation is now in school," Kelly said.

Some Legislature watchers have said they think LB221 finally is receiving enough votes because legislators are becoming tired of the issue and want to get it out of the way.

Kelly, however, said that people aren't getting tired of the bill but are getting excited about it.

If the bill passes, Kelly predicted that college campuses will see a dramatic change in the types of activities offered. If the bill becomes law, he said, university students will turn to more non-alcohol-related activities to entertain themselves.

Kelly also said that the battle about the drinking age may not be over.

"There will be those who will be watching and monitoring the effects of the bill," he said. If age 20 is not effective in cutting the number of teenage drinkers and teenage alcohol-related traffic deaths, he said he will try again for age 21.

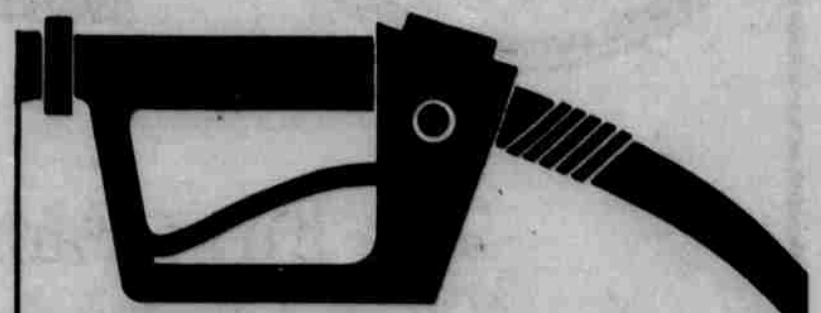
It will take at least two years to determine how effective the new law is, he said. The time limit on the grandfather clause must run out first, he said.

With the grandfather clause, those who are drinking legally before the law goes into effect may continue drinking. LB221 will become law 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, if it passes Final Reading.

Indications from Kelly's office are that the bill will come up for Final Reading the first or second week in February.



'Almost in control'



**Don't be a Gas Guzzler!**  
Share a ride, take the bus,  
or walk.



South 13th & Arapahoe  
Indian Village Shopping Center

presents

**CROSSFIRE**

*Tuesday through Saturday*

*February 5th - 9th*

## Little Bo's

**MONDAY  
&  
TUESDAY**

Free bar drinks & draws  
for ladies all night

**WEDNESDAY  
THURSDAY**

10¢ draws for men from  
7 - 9 pm

2 fers from 7 - 12 pm

3 fers from 8 - 10 pm

**OPEN NIGHTLY**

**7 PM - 1 AM**

**27th & Cornhusker**