

(Continued)

Rep. James Dunlap, R-Bartlesville, also in favor of the bill, told members to look back on this day, especially when OPEA members decide to rally on the capitol steps. "The amendment will be rejected on the Senate side and will go to conference committee." He continued, "I will support the bill because it is the right thing to do, but when it comes back from committee in May, I do not want to have to say I told you so."

Steidley, in favor of the bill, explained that the six months will allow the Legislature to address other issues. "The OPEA director supports this," he said. "We are also in better shape financially, than we have been in years."

In a press conference later in the day, Johnson said OPEA has not only endorsed the bill, they are also comfortable with the new provision.

Other measures passed by members today included:

SB876, authored by Rep. Bob Ed Culver, D-Tahlequah, authorizes the Scenic Rivers Commission to acquire additional property for the development and maintenance of scenic river areas. Members voted 76 to 22 in favor of the bill, the emergency clause also passed.

SB907, authored by Rep. Don McCorkell, D-Tulsa, modifies definition and statutory references pertaining to the Oklahoma Jobs Program Act. Members voted 95 to 4 in favor of the bill. However, Rep. Fred Stanley, D-Madill, asked for the bill to be reconsidered. McCorkell tried to suspend the rules and asked for the bill to be reconsidered today, but his motion failed 49 to 50.

SB1147, authored by Benson, prohibits the use of accident reports for commercial purposes. Members voted 98 to 0 in favor of the bill.

Rep. James Hamilton, D-Poteau, motioned to strike all Senate amendments on **HB1138**, and the measure was assigned to General Conference Committee on Appropriations.

BURNING BAN LIFTED FOR MOST COUNTIES

From the Office of the Governor

Burn Ban lifted for all but 19 counties.

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Governor Frank Keating announced Thursday the ban on outdoor burning in Oklahoma has been lifted for all but 19 counties. Those northwest Oklahoma counties where the ban remains in effect are: Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Blaine, Cimarron, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield, Grant, Greer, Harmon, Harper, Major, Roger Mills, Texas, Washita, Woods and Woodward.

"Thanks to changing weather patterns bringing increased moisture and cooler temperatures, we have decided to lift the burning ban in most counties. I appreciate the public's understanding of the severe fire danger our state has faced over the past month and their willingness to comply with the ban," Governor Keating said.

The statewide ban went into effect on February 22 at a time of extreme fire danger. The burning ban has been very effective in reducing the number of wildfires. Fire activity dropped almost immediately following the issuance of the ban and has remained at lower than average levels for most of the state.

Although the return of moisture to the state has been a big help in reducing the number of fires, it doesn't mean the drought is over. Some areas of the state need more than five inches of rain to bring an end to the drought. Fire danger still exists and caution in the use of fire is still needed.

The executive order lifting the burning ban for 58 counties was signed by Lt. Governor Mary Fallin for Governor Keating who is in New York attending an education summit.

"Don't think of retiring from the world until the world will be sorry that you retire."

Samuel Johnson