

February 5, 1980

LB 658

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Beutler, do you want to explain the committee amendments? Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, as best as I can recall, really the only change that was made in committee was to add the emergency clause and there may have been one other small technical change but the one and only substantive change was to add the emergency clause.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay, the motion is the adoption of the emergency clause. All those in favor vote aye, opposed no. We are voting on the committee amendment to LB 658, emergency clause. Have you all voted? Record.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The motion is carried. The committee amendment is adopted. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, this is a small bill that I introduced on behalf of the County of Lancaster, and in short it allows for the use of referees by the county board when they are sitting as a Board of Equalization. Let me give you a little history on this development. Back before 1969 in each and every county in this state the Board of Commissioners, the county board sat as the Board of Equalization and they themselves heard each and every dispute and protest with regard to the assessment and valuation of property. Then in 1969 it became obvious that the workload was extremely heavy in some counties and we voted here in the Legislature to allow Douglas County to use referees. Now ten years later Lancaster County is asking for the same privilege. This bill by way of... I would just note that the bill is supported by all six of the Lancaster County delegation and it did come out of the Revenue Committee without a dissenting vote. Just to give you an idea of the workload increase in the County of Lancaster this last year, which is basically the reason for the bill, when you get down to the number of days upon which it was possible to hear protests in the Board of Equalization it came down to thirteen working days and in that period of time they had 128 protests to hear. Okay, the result of this kind of workload is that they are allowing only three or four minutes per protest, and it is hoped that by allowing a referee system each individual protester will get a truly adequate amount of time to state his case and to have his arguments heard and have a little give and take on the subject. Now the adding of the referees, just to remind you what the present law says, does not mean that the Board of

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