

January 13, 1981

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay, Senator Beutler, do you want to explain the amendment?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Sneaker, members of the Legislature, the rule is being passed around to you right now and I have to apologize for some handwritten material on it but the continual process of compromise and negotiation goes on even to the last minute. Again, I repeat, this is one of the three changes that people wanted to talk about as far as I could ascertain from the responses to the questionnaire last summer. I might also mention for the benefit of the new members and to refresh the memory of the old members that during the last two years since I have been in the Legislature, at least, really the one continuing hang up we had or really the worst procedural problem that we had at any one point in time had to do with a bill, personal property tax bill as I recall, and how you ended debate on that, how you ended a filibuster. It got long and involved. It got very heated. It really was an unfortunate situation and this rule is an attempt to respond to the need for a cloture rule of some type. Does everybody have a copy of it now? I hope so. Basically the provision is this; a motion for cloture will be in order after two and a half hours of debate on a priority bill or after an hour of debate on a nonpriority bill. So in other words, up until the point when two and a half hours has expired, and this is with regard to each stage of debate, you have three stages of debate so theoretically before you would have two and a half hours times three of ensured debate on a bill, two and a half hours at each stage. When the cloture motion is made, then what happens basically is that you finish up the argument on whatever amendment or motion is pending. Then you have a vote on that, and then you have a vote on cloture. And under the provisions of the rule as written now it would take three quarters vote required in order for the cloture motion to be successful. If three quarters vote in favor, then in that event debate ceases. You close on the bill and there is a vote on the advancement of the bill from that stage of debate. If the cloture motion should fail, then no further cloture motion is in order for an additional hour. You get another additional hour of debate before you can bring the same motion again. The only other change that has been made is to say that a motion to suspend the rules for purposes of cloture will require a three-fourths vote, so you have the same vote or the same number required to close debate either through a suspension of the rules or through the cloture motion. Those are the basic provisions. Right now, for the freshmen, the manner of ending a filibuster is quite complicated and haphazard. If there are no amendments on file, you can simply call the question and that ends debate. If there