

January 13, 1981

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I would rise to oppose Senator Beutler's proposed change to the rules. I think that we have seen several times in the last few years attempts to forestall debate in the Legislature but the usual process for closing off debate has been to suspend the rules and I think that that is a very appropriate way to stop debate on an issue. We can recall several times in the last several years when debate has become very lengthy and it has become very clear to everyone in the Legislature that several members of the Legislature were attempting to stall bills through the amendment process but during that process they expressed their opinions, they made it clear why they were opposing the legislation and they also inserted very important information in the legislative record which eventually could and has been used in court tests on those particular pieces of legislation and I think it is important that we do allow for that opportunity to exist through the amendment process and that debate be allowed to continue on issues before this Legislature. If you recall the debate on the personal property tax issue last year, Senator Newell had a great number of amendments and eventually the rules were suspended and the Legislature proceeded. Perhaps now in retrospect, Senator Newell had some points that maybe we should have listened to at that point in time but the point is his comments were made, became part of the record, his point of view was expressed whether it was right or wrong, and I think it is important that this ability be retained in a deliberative body. Usually when we make mistakes, it is not because we proceeded too slowly, it is because we proceeded too quickly and so I would urge you this time, Senator Koch, in the interest of freedom of speech, to oppose the cloture rule.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Is there any further discussion? Otherwise the Chair recognizes Senator Beutler to close.

SENATOR BEUTLER: If you are going to talk about the quality of legislation and how you get the better quality of legislation, let me suggest to you that you will probably get it with the cloture rule and not without it. Perhaps on one particular bill, possibly, conceivably, although not possibly within my experience of two years, perhaps on a particular bill maybe on one stage of debate, that on one stage of debate, debate will be cut short a little bit but now you have unlimited bill introductions. In addition to the hundred bills that were never even discussed at the end of last session, you are probably going to have more bills in the future and how are those going to get discussed. If you don't take a reasonable amount of time on each and every bill, what is left for the other bills. I remind you again at the end of last session fifty to a hundred bills were passed with abbreviated or no debate and another hundred or more bills