

January 6, 1982

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I'm going to support the amendment because I think the amendment is a right step in the ultimate right direction which very simply is to allow unlimited bill introduction. What the amendment would do very simply, is it would untie the Governor's hands. It would say that the Governor may introduce at any time any number of bills the Governor so desires. And Senator Haberman has indicated that such an amendment is necessary for purposes of allowing the Governor to operate in an emergency. Senator Lamb has indicated that such an amendment is necessary so that the Governor has freedom of action and mobility and those are very fine, appropriate reasons and so too, is it necessary for individual members in our body to be able to introduce an unlimited number of bills. So often in politics we are governed by myth as opposed to reality and I've always felt that one of my duties as a public official and as a politician is to attempt to inform the electorate on what the truths actually are. So that in due course myth no longer governs but reality controls. Now the electorate believes that the Legislature passes too many laws. The electorate believes that the Legislature runs amuck in terms of bill introduction. Fairly recently I was looking through the Book of States which is an annual publication of lots of statistics, facts and figures regarding government and in the Book of States there is a chart that deals with a number of laws introduced to each of the state legislatures and the number of bills passed into law by each of the state legislatures. I am pleased to tell you that Nebraska inevitably is at the very bottom of the list in terms of the number of bills introduced and in terms of the numbers of measures enacted into law. The only legislature that consistently is lower than Nebraska is Wyoming which meets once every two years for thirty days and that is it. We are very disciplined in our own introduction of bills. Each of us works with a finite amount of time. Each of us has a finite amount of energy. Some of us will introduce more bills than will others of us but the truth of the matter is, and not the myth, the truth is that the Nebraska Unicameral ranks at the very bottom of all the states in terms of bill introductions and bill passages and inasmuch as we do this through our own self-discipline and our own desires, it is only fit and appropriate that we allow the Governor the opportunity to introduce unlimited number of bills and so, too, we allow ourselves the opportunity to introduce an unlimited number of bills. Since I have been here I have heard members say, "It's a shame, it's a shame that the large number of bills that we have basically precludes us from acting on every piece of legislation..."

SENATOR CLARK: You have one minute left.