

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I rose about a week ago to speak in favor of this same motion on another bill. At that time, I expressed my reluctance to vote for it because of my concern that the system we have established in the state for establishing tax rates, for establishing our budget, obviously there was some breakdown in the system that we had and that I was concerned that we were taking an unusual step in trying to set the tax rates through the Legislature. But I went ahead and I voted for it because I wanted to emphasize what Senator Barrett and others have said that we had a reduction in the federal level that is unusual and that we need to compensate for that, and so perhaps at that time we ought to go ahead and take that step. In further reflection upon the issue, however, as Rules Chairman and somebody has been concerned about the new Rule number 8 which we adopted earlier this session, it seems as though we are getting to the point where the horse is not leading the cart but the cart is in front of the horse and we are trying to load it up with the tax increase before we actually start off on the destination we are seeking. In just a few minutes we are going to be discussing LR 215 which is the process we set up under Rule 8 this year. That process says we sit down and discuss the budget fairly early in the session. We have delayed it now several weeks, but that we talk early in the session about the budget about what we think we can afford in this state, what ought to be the budget level in this state and then the Appropriations Committee goes back to work and comes forth with a budget that meets that maximum figure that we had set in this resolution. At that point then we discuss the budget bills on the floor, amend those and pass those bills and send them to the Governor, the Governor vetoes or signs, those bills become law, and at that point the Board of Equalization sets the tax rates to meet the cost that we have established for those budgets. That sounds like a reasonable system to me. I think it is an excellent system, as a matter of fact. But somehow we are trying to keep throwing up these amendments on these tax rate increases which I had been voting for, but I finally decided I am not sure that that is the way to go anymore, that we shouldn't be setting tax rates in this Legislature, that is a job the Board of Equalization is supposed to be doing. And we have got this rule that will determine the intent of the Legislature on what we feel we should spend this year and that we are going to discuss that in just a few moments. So I think that this amendment which has been tried now twice before,