

January 8, 1990

obvious that in the absence of a rule like this, there was going to be great problems. And in many ways, this is probably, this particular regular session is the closest thing to that special session at that time knowing full well here on the third day of the session that we are going to have some problems if we don't have some sort of limit on debate. You know, the fact is that the Nebraska Legislature and the United States Senate, as far as we know, at least, are the only two legislative bodies in the country where you can really have a filibuster that goes on forever and ever. And a lot...for a variety of reasons, I know when I was young and learning about the filibuster in school, many folks in the room remember Jimmy Stewart, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington", have some sort of a romantic notion that a filibuster is a good and reasonable thing to have in our legislative process. We always remember the good things and seem to forget like, for example, on the federal, the problem it's causing the federal side, you know, we don't know how many years civil rights was pushed back because of the filibustering techniques of the boll weevils and the Southern Democrats. You know, people tend to forget those type of bad things created by the filibuster when we talk about it, and I hope you take those things into mind as we debate this here this morning. But, you know, the fact of the matter is that this morning as we debate this, Senator Chambers and some other people will raise in righteous indignation saying how terrible it is that we consider this and how bad it would be if we adopted any sort of cloture rule because, in their opinions, we would not be allowing a minority the chance to speak, and I guess, you know, I submit to you the fact of the matter is with our present rules and our present method of rule suspension, we already have a form of cloture in the Nebraska Legislature. I think it is a very unreasonable and unfair form, to be quite honestly, by its very nature, the present rule we have much more limits the voice of the minority, much more so than the cloture rule we are bringing here today, and so I said, I mean I think we would be better off having an actual cloture rule up front at the beginning of the session than to find...I remember during special session when Senator Haberman had an ongoing rule suspension motion sitting on the table so we couldn't discuss anything further, and all of us wanted to go home, so we thanked Senator Haberman for that, but that is not the way to squash debate. The fact of the matter is I think we would be much better off to adopt a rule like this where we quite simply say that on any given stage of debate, in General File, Select File, or Final Reading, you can debate a bill for eight hours. Now eight hours is a long time.