

February 24, 1976

PRESIDENT: Chair recognizes Senator Kelly.

SENATOR KELLY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I am a State Senator. I represent 30,308 people living in the City of Grand Island. I was sent down here to deliberate the problems in this society. I was not, necessarily, sent down here to pass bills. Those 30,308 people have an entry into this Legislature through my office that I am temporarily holding in their custody. This is where the bills come from--the problems that are in this society. They are not here at the individual whim of whomever is sitting in a legislative seat.

Back in 1971 and '72 we had a Legislature meet, also in '73-'74 we had a Legislature meet, again in '75 and we're finishing it up in '76. In the tradition of biannual sessions those three Legislatures have operated as though they were six. Each time we meet, in the 90-day or 60-day session except for the election of our officers and our committee chairmen, we operate exactly as if we had two years in which to do the 90-day or 60-day work.

Tradition is a strong factor in this society as it is in any individuals life. Tradition dies hard. The people said "Change to annual sessions". We are trying to overcome the tradition of the biannual sessions. As of today, we have not accomplished the change. We are working, experimenting in our normal deliberative fashion to come up with something that will work on an annual basis. In my experience with group activity they will succeed. This Legislature will succeed in working annual sessions as they're intended to work.

Back, again, to the Governor's request that we just meet every two years. This is extremely difficult for me to understand because he said that just six weeks of us coming off from Special Session. In the remarks that he said that we should only meet every two years, he further says "But now when you go away this Spring don't go very far because I fully expect to call you into Special Session in the Fall". Now what kind of a game have we got going where we say "Now look, we only want you to meet every two years, but I just got you out of Special Session and I'm just getting ready to get you into another one". I don't get the shell game in that proposition. As 30,308 people I will not accept that shell game.

It is my intention to represent, to the very best ability that I can, those people that are represented by the 35th District. When they want a bill entered in the Legislature I will enter it. That's the City Council, the County Board, the people or a government agency that is having trouble, I will enter that bill. I believe that anything that prevents me from doing that gags those 30,308 people. I did not come down here to consent to them to be told to shut up.

We must have annual sessions. We can do it and we can do it by simple rule changes. The one that should be seriously considered is one that would allow any and all bills to be entered at the start of the 90-day session. In the 60-day session only those bills that touch on a particular subject, namely money, should be entered. The committees and the leadership of the Legislature would have two years in which they could work off their workload. Now just think about it.