

January 30, 1973

Legislature and by that, I don't mean that if we vote--people vote for partisan Legislature they are going to run the Legislature. I can vote any way I want whether this Legislature is partisan or nonpartisan. But if it is partisan, the person who runs for the Legislature will have to appear as a Republican or as a Democrat or as an Independent or as a Socialist or something. At least the people of this state would know that much about you. As it stands now, some of them know nothing. Of course, Republicans can run as Republicans and really be Democrats and vice versa but I think most people are more or less proud of the party in which they are registered and after all, the members of the Congress run on a party ticket, and what's the matter with that. Furthermore, what's the matter with putting it to the vote of the people. Well, I'll tell you what's the matter with it in some people's view in this body and I understand their apprehension, they might not get elected. As every member of this body knows that he can be elected on a nonpartisan ballot. That's how we all happened to get here, isn't it, but we don't know for sure that we can get elected on a partisan ballot. I, for one, will take my chances. You say, well, that is easy for you to say Proud. Your district is probably mostly Republican and you're a Republican. Well, I'll take my chances anyway but once again what's the matter with putting it to the vote of the people. Let's take the bull by the horns and let the people of this state decide it.

SPEAKER: The chair recognizes Senator Burbach.

SENATOR BURBACH: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, that was quite a speech we just heard from Senator Proud. When I knew him a few years back, he was registered as a Democrat. Yes, he saw the light Senator Duis says because his district is predominately Republican as he indicated. I suppose that at times that there is no one any more partisan than I am, so I think today, not whether someone should be partisan or not but when they should be. I feel that there is a distinct time to be a partisan and a time not to be partisan. A place to be partisan, a place not to be partisan. Nebraska Legislature is not the place nor is it the time to try to make it the place. I have many friends in both the Democrat and Republican parties. I value their friendship and their council but I do not want them telling me here in the Legislature how I must vote on a specific piece of Legislation based solely on the political considerations involved. I vote my conscience and what I think is good for the people of my district and state, Democrat or Republican. If I think political consideration should enter into a decision, I take this into account and so does every other member of this body if he wants to speak truthfully about it. I am fearful that with the current size of this Nebraska Legislature that partisanship which often is merely Democrat opposing legislation sponsored by a Republican and Republican opposing a Democrat because he is a Democrat, that will overshadow the logic. I am fearful that energetic party leaders will want to take on a position on everything and I think today that this neither necessary or desirable. I feel strongly that making this body partisan will lead to a two house Legislature which Nebraska neither needs or can afford at this time. When you set up a partisanship as an overriding authority on a body of this size, you invite these problems. Many, many bills suddenly get no public hearing at all. Someone's dignity is offended then this overshadows what should be. Bills will start disappearing like snowflakes on a warm day. By no means do I wish to say that a partisan legislature is corrupt, however. What I'm talking about is what happens when you do have a partisan legislature. When you have a large lawmaking body which means you generally have a populace state with many complex problems, I could see where there could be a merit in partisanship. Congress, for instance, I feel should never be nonpartisan. It could not function. By the same token, this Legislature functions extremely well for Nebraska and the people of Nebraska