

SPEAKER: Is there any further discussion of the motion to indefinitely postpone. Chair recognizes Senator Frank Lewis.

SENATOR F. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support Senator Proud's motion to postpone this bill. For those that said I don't agree with him, I want you to note the agreement here, Senator Proud. First of all, I think to be honest about the bill. I noticed this morning that there were three or four little executive sessions going on on this floor, conferring and I'm sure they were substance, formulation of policy, in fact, our Public Works Committee just had a little meeting back to back talking about rule procedures for this afternoon. We're kidding ourselves to think that this is going to solve the problems, everybody seeing what everybody's doing. I think the law is pretty clear now. If you're going to do anything officially in subdivisions of government, you have to take the vote in an open meeting; to avoid anybody not understanding where the meeting is, you have to give a three day notice. Now that's fair. Now I realize the popularity of pushing for open meetings. This is not new in this body. This is not even new with Senator Carpenter. This was done when he was about 15 I think. Woodrow Wilson introduced a little open diplomacy he said. Negotiations should not be in secret so everything ought to be open so the idea is not new in nature. The successes of it have been consistent--poor, very poor. Unless we're going to hire a lot more press and unless we're going to hire some public people to follow two or three members of the school board or two or three members of county board or two or three members of the Legislature, everywhere they go to make sure they don't discuss policy, tentative formulation of plans, it's unworkable and again, I admit to you, it's popular. This is probably not good political insight on my part but I think we better look at this realistically. This is not going to work, never will work. I think we have a fair open meeting law now. I think that any official decision that's made is made and people are recorded as to where they stand. The meetings are known to everyone. In my judgment this is a bad piece of legislation and ought to be defeated so I certainly support Senator Proud's motion to kill the bill.

SPEAKER: Chair recognizes Senator, well, Syas was really first. Well, Senator Syas.

SENATOR SYAS: Senators, I have a few things that I think that I'm disturbed about with the Carpenter amendment and now it's part of the bill. You know, for instance, I think the outstate fellows did too, we, when we have the reapportionment thing, I think we reapportioned it, we reapportioned, had our caucuses on reapportioning without inviting the general public in, did you ever figure out what the general public would have been if they'd been in on that one? For instance, I had the reapportionment meetings for the Omaha-Douglas, for the Douglas County group in my front room. I think it was three or four times. My front room, it was pretty crowded with about 12 Senators and the people there were helping us draw the lines, of course, if I had to divide in the whole neighborhood, I don't know what I would have done, but I did serve coffee. Senator Mahoney was there, he's laughing. Now, this, this thing could go really too-- I, I wonder now the way the bill is if I can meet with a couple of Senators over a cup of coffee or if my wife and I can go out with another Senator's wife without inviting the general public along and tell them what restaurant we're going to eat in. Let's put it this way on the existing law; the existing law is mine, you know, I mean at least I introduced it, I have been disappointed in the press on the existing law. I haven't had the press ask me for the Carpenter amendment or this type of thing to extend it. I'll tell you why I'm, why I don't think the press cares about the existing law even. I'll give it to them right straight. I thought I was doing something when I got in at their urging, that the agendas would be published when a subdivision of government was going to have a meeting. I have checked with subdivisions of government, they tell me, they hand them to the press, press never does anything with them. The people are not informed.