

SENATOR BEUTLER: Otherwise it has nothing to do with that. Otherwise it has to do with building up a structure to compete in an interstate banking situation.

SENATOR DECAMP: Yes.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Which is it really all about, the first or the latter?

SENATOR DECAMP: My goals are...

SENATOR BEUTLER: We need to straighten out the arguments here, I think, a little bit so...

SENATOR DECAMP: Okay. I've made it pretty clear what my goals are. My goals and my purpose is to internally, within the state, make sure we strengthen the overall fabric by having some institutions merged, made branches of some of the stronger and larger institutions. We have four hundred and, I don't know, sixty-five or seventy banks in the state. That is more banks per person than any state in the United States. I'm not sure that you can support a system like that forever. I would still like to see most of the rural areas keep a small bank and that can probably only be done through merger or acquisition in that fashion as a branch.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Let me ask you this, Senator DeCamp, as a matter of your personal philosophy, how many large banks should there be in this state?

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR DECAMP: As a matter of my personal philosophy, my personal philosophy is artificial protectionism hurts the ones you are trying to protect and hurts the people. I would eliminate the Initiative 300's. I would eliminate the various other artificial regulations we keep on banking. That would be my personal goal.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Well, what I'm getting at is if...how many more times are we going to increase the deposit limitation before interstate banking comes, in order to build up local institutions, or maybe one local institution? I guess we get down to that question too. Let me ask you another preliminary question. How many local institutions are