

January 9, 1986

Senator Wesely.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, these issues come up in response to comments from people and the public at large who don't understand a legislature or its activities, and editors who don't understand and who don't care. It is easy for those people out there to make flippant remarks like the Legislature should never meet again and I will be happy. Then if a problem arises that affects them or theirs, they immediately say, and it is common throughout this country, there ought to be a law. Then when you go into the lawmaking process, those same people say there are too many laws. What they mean is the laws that they don't like ought never to have been passed, but every issue that they would like to see go their way they feel there ought to be a law on it making it that way. So were there not generalists rather than journalists reporting on the Legislature, in other words if there were people who understood the process, who had to have some training in at least political science or civics, they would understand the difference, for example, between a bill and a rule change. I was listening to the radio going to Omaha yesterday and the reporters kept saying that Senator Beutler's bill to impose a Code of Ethics was defeated. They will refer to an amendment as a bill. They don't know, they don't understand the issue that they are sent to cover, so the way the Legislature is victimized is by ignorance on those who are supposed to be covering the Legislature. As has often been said in the realm of law, the intelligence and ability of an attorney is limited by the level of intelligence and ability of the judge who hears the case. If the judge is a nincompoop and a dumbbell, you need not quote precedent or go into involved legal theories because he or she is not going to understand it. You have to give the homey examples like, by god, this fellow was screaming like a hog with his snoot stuck under the gate, and the judge rears back and feels right at home because that is not above and beyond his ability to comprehend. So when the public is reading misinformation fed to them by reporters, well-meaning but uninformed or who simply don't care, how can you expect the public to react as informed people would react. The public is not to blame but we are to blame when we allow ourselves to be stampeded into forsaking the job that we are to do as legislators. Our job is to make laws. If somebody who is in this body feels that there are 20 issues that need to be dealt with, that person