

March 4, 1986

please.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. President. You know I've never liked the saying "shall the chair be overruled" because it always sounded to me like, shall we all vote against Bill Nichol or not? And I always wished that we'd find a new way of doing things rather than saying, shall the chair be overruled? This morning we are going to consider suspending the rules. And I want you to know that what I am about to say is said in all honesty that I want to be consistent in the way this Legislative Chamber operates. I want to be consistent with the way we use our rules. All of you received a letter, on January 14th, to members of the Legislature, from Chris Beutler who was then Chairman of the Exec Board. It said the Exec Board of the Legislative Council met in Executive Session on January 14th. The resignation of Senator Wesely from the Nebraska Retirement Systems was accepted, and a replacement was discussed. It was moved and seconded and voted upon unanimously by those present that Senator Marsh be appointed to fill the vacancy. The Executive Board made no motion to suspend the rules, they just did that. If you look at the rules you will find, in your rule book, that it says during session all vacancies on standing or select committees created by the death or resignation of a member shall be filled by a majority vote of all members of the Committee on Committees. But the Executive Board made that change, and there was no meeting of the Committee on Committees. I'm a member of it. I recall no meeting ever being called. We just got the letter. So there the Executive Board itself, without suspending the rules, without a vote to suspend the rules, just said, this is the way it is going to be. I would like to take you all back to the first week when this Legislature met. You remember then we discussed the workload of committees. And again the Executive Board took it upon themselves that they would do that study and the Rules Committee would do that study. But what does the rule book say? The rule book says the Committee on Committees shall have authority to call before it a committee chairperson and discuss the workload of said committee. We ignored that rule. We started this session off ignoring the rules. And again our Executive Board did not have any motion to suspend the rules. And we just let them get away with it and do it. So I can tell you this, it isn't a matter of personalities with me, with Senator Carsten, whom I deeply respect, or Senator Marsh, whom...she and I have both shared a lot in