

## Filibuster technique just 'hot air'

The Senate technique of filibustering is little more than a waste of time, the taxpayers' money and hot air.

Recordings of what sometimes transpires on the Senate floor during a filibuster are almost as ludicrous as the phony articles inserted in the Congressional Record last month.

The congressional publication contained articles supposedly written by congressmen.

One article, for example, included a reprinted Ann Landers column about an exhibitionist, followed by a congressman's remark that it was a "darn insightful column."

In general, the Record "read like Mad magazine," according to one representative.

Although untrue, the articles probably related as closely to proposed legislation as a Senator's filibuster sometimes does.

During one of these talking marathons, a senator may drone on indefinitely, until debate is cut off

by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

A senator who filibusters may enlighten his colleagues on topics ranging from great grandma's recipe for pecan pie to the list of registered voters in Chicago's seventh precinct.

Several hours sometimes pass before exhaustion or boredom with his material causes the senator to cease.

Supporters of the filibuster contend it forces the majority to pause and re-evaluate the proposed legislation. They also say its tests the majority's intensity against that of the procrastinating minority.

Both contentions are little more than idealistic gloss.

The filibuster's main purpose is not to allow time for reflection, but to stop an important measure without any publicly recorded vote on its merits.

Because senators have to answer to constituents on measures, they sometimes prefer to vote for unlimited debate rather than to

vote on the merits of controversial legislation.

Traditionally, filibustering has been the sanctuary of the Senate's Southern bloc in last-ditch stands against civil rights legislation. More recently, the filibuster has been used increasingly by liberal senators.

But the filibuster is not just a matter affecting civil rights and past history. If not curbed, it may become an even greater threat to future Senate effectiveness.

The risks of legislative delay and inaction are at least as grave to the security and welfare of the nation as the risks of action.

A small minority must not be allowed to block an action designed to meet an emergent crisis, without even voting on its merits.

Floor debate on proposed legislation either should be limited from the start or cloture should be altered so fewer votes are needed to cut off debate.

Jane Owens



## Tunnel repairs buried in budget

Capital construction priorities on the UNL campus have long been bones of contention among regents, taxpayers and departmental spokesmen.

The issues have varied—academics vs. arts, arts vs. athletics, athletics vs. practically everyone. The top dogs in these struggles also have varied—from pressure group to championship team, and from election year to election year.

The decisions made rarely mean life and death, but one construction need—apparently buried for years under other, "higher," priorities—could be just that. Life or death.

The tunnels which honeycomb UNL are almost legendary. Expecting tales of cockroaches, rats and long-lost freshmen, the *Daily Nebraskan* sent a photographer and reporter into these tunnels on Friday. They emerged, not covered with cobwebs, but bearing evidence that some sections of the four-mile network are in dangerous need of repair.

Crumbling walls and ceilings, inadequate ventilation and jungle-like temperatures don't spell safe working conditions. Add to these the fact that, under "S" Street, the passages are too narrow for easy escape in an emergency, and an ominous picture is presented.

Rebecca Brite

## Wage and price controls possible solution

As our economy flounders along in the twin wake of recession and advanced inflation, many voices have offered solutions.

The answers have been as different and as varied as the personalities of the persons who offered them. One of the ideas advanced as a solution is the reinstatement of wage and price controls.

The track record of wage and price controls in this or any other country is highly dubious, to say the least.

George Meany, Sen. Mike Mansfield, and other wage and price control advocates are aware of that history, yet they still demand such a reinstatement. Why is this?

Part of the answer can be found in examining a national psychological phenomenon: action. Any action at all is thought to be better than "just sitting there."

And that solution had better not take much time either. We are Americans, we want action and results right NOW...not tomorrow.

If wage and price controls were reinstated we would have action and results, but not exactly the results we would want as a country. The controls cannot be effective by themselves. We are a free market economy, and the constraint of individual factors within

that economy will only result in its increased inefficiency.

As an example, look at the Soviet Union. For more than 50 years, they have operated under a rigid, centralized economic system. They also have had controls not only on wages and prices, but also on manpower, natural resources, capital and education. Under such a system, they seem to control economic factors as much as possible.

mark b. rasmussen  
right turn

Without arguing the morality of such a system, we must admit that the Russians have made great strides in economic growth. Yet, even with such broad powers of economic control, they still are faced with some inflation, as well as a chronic problem of shortages within their economic system.

Even with 50 years of experience and the power of a police state, Russia cannot adequately "control" its economy.

The inequality and ineffectiveness of the meat-price freeze is a recent example that shows the fallacy of depending on piecemeal, artificial constraints to control our economy.

Our state usury law is yet another example of the inherent inadequacy of such limited attempts at control.

What if we applied wage and price controls across the board? Would that solve everything? No, because wages and prices are irrevocably intertwined with industry output decisions, consumer demand, capital outlay decisions and ultimately, the overall distribution of wealth in our society.

There is no effective way any of these factors can be controlled independently. Nor can they be controlled collectively if we still are to have a free economy and a free country.

No thanks, Mr. Meany, Sen. Mansfield and others of your ilk.

Easy answers and calls for dramatic affirmative action won't work in this case. The only "controls" needed to curb inflation are those on spending, both consumer and governmental.

That doesn't sound as politically attractive, but I guess that's a peculiarity about the truth. It rarely does.