

conducted a series of meetings in this area between business and labor factions, and was able to, at that time, arrive at a mutually agreeable number that was brought to the floor by amendment and was passed by the body with relatively little controversy on the floor. That was also my intent this year. However, the parties were unable to agree, so the bill was advanced with the offer of the business community, which is essentially the \$8 per year increase phased in over two years. The bill will come up at some time in natural order. The amendment that is offered, most probably by amendments to the amendment, will result in floor action that will take up quite a lot of our time. The matter is really not connected in any way with 414, which is a bill that provides a penalty for the Department of Labor for employees...employers who fail to report employment information statistics to the Department of Labor as they are prepared to do. So, what I would ask the body is not to suspend the rules at this point. Let the issue, and it is an important matter, of unemployment compensation and the rate, come up through the normal course of events so that we have the full opportunity for floor debate on General File, on Select File, and then, if an agreement isn't reached by that time, we can work off of Final Reading. I think that we are going to constrain the amount of time that is available to discuss this by working on it at this time, and we would...the body and the employees that are covered under this act would be better served if we worked through the system as it is generally used. So I would oppose the suspension of the rules.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Hefner, you are the next speaker, and you'll be followed by Senator Wesely, Senator Haberman, Senator Ashford, Senator Lindsay, Senator Hall, Senator Morrissey, and Senator Dierks. Senator Hefner.

SENATOR HEFNER: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise to urge you to vote against the suspension of the rules because we do have a bill now that addresses this problem. I had hoped that Business and Labor could work together and resolve these differences. And the two differences are unemployment compensation and workers compensation. Like Senator Coordsen said, a few years back we were able to work out a compromise, and I think this is the right way to go. But what Senator Hall is trying to do is trying to amend a bill that really doesn't deal with unemployment compensation, it deals with employers being assessed a penalty when they fail to report. So I would say that, even if we do suspend the rules, I would find it hard