

April 7, 1989

At least this presiding officer finds it very difficult to start any business with 25 people present. It takes another five to 10 minutes to come up with a decent working body. I realize that there are a lot of demands on your time, I realize that as well or better than anyone here. But there is no reason why we can't do a little better job of getting to this floor at the appointed hour. The absenteeism this year, at least in my opinion, is far more serious than it's been since I have been a member of this body. It is not unusual to have 20 to 25 percent of the members of this body absent at any one given time. We have people in our Legislature whose bills have not advanced because of the absenteeism. I think it has reached serious proportions and, as we conclude the week, I'd like to share that with you and hope that you'll think about it over the weekend. And with only 28 days left, with a number of priority bills that haven't even been addressed, with the budget bills that haven't even been advanced to the floor yet, I think you can appreciate the amount of work that is before us. I guess, finally, I would say the calls of the house, 10 minutes, that's not unusual to wait for people to return to the Chamber. It has reached the proportion that we even have calls of the house to cease debate, and I can't think of anything more ridiculous than that, because people aren't on the floor. I would appreciate it, when the calls come, please make every effort to drop what you are doing and get to the floor, or if you're leaving the floor, try to stay close, if at all possible, out of consideration for your colleagues, if nothing else. That's the end of the sermonette, we go through it every session. This is a friendly, a friendly sermonette. The next one won't be so friendly. Any questions? Senator Korshoj.

SENATOR KORSHOJ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I needed that. I've preached that for three years. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Well, it does become frustrating to all of us. Now, it was my hope that we would work today until noon, break, have lunch and come back for a full legislative day. That was my earlier plan, and I have no problem with it. A number of you have been asking already what we're going to be doing through the lunch hour. Some prefer to work through the lunch hour and break a little early this afternoon. My preferences are to break, but I have no serious problem with doing otherwise. We haven't taken a straw vote on this subject for a long time. I thought it might be fun to put it before the body. I think we probably better have a call of