

January 18, 1995

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Elmer. Senator Chambers, to discuss the Elmer amendment.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I'm opposed to this amendment. Many times discussions are had and people say the majority should have its way. If the majority is always to have its way, you don't need rules. Force is what allows the majority to prevail. Might makes right. Constitutions are put in place to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority. There are rules in the Legislature and the only reason you have to have them is because there are groups and the constituent parts of that group will vary from issue to issue which will be in a minority position. And the rules are there to ensure that there is not a tyranny of the majority. Others may view the rules differently. They may feel as Senator Elmer obviously does, that you should enshrine this tyranny in the rules. I doubt that the rule will come into play too many times, but it is there and it is available for a great amount of mischief. As I stated earlier this morning, I'm not going to spend as much time on these proposals as I have on others. But Senator Elmer and others who may be following our discussions, since it is going to go without saying that I will be on the short end of the stick more often than anybody else, you all can get me now and I'm not going to get angry, but I am going to get even. That has not been my practice in the past. I would suffer defeats, some of them legitimately so because people differed honestly on the issue. Others were done because I am who I am and I would rise above that as issues came before us and deal with that issue on its merits. Since now the whole legislative process is to be viewed as a seamless web and what happens in one part of that web will cause reverberations that will go across and throughout the rest of the web, that's the way I'm going to view this session. And if you all think that my efforts in the past to represent those constituencies that need strong, uncompromising representation are such as to justify rules of this kind, I'm going to show you what a truly recalcitrant member of the Legislature can do and I'm going to do it. I'm going to get even and I'm going to do as I am done by and I will outdo you because a pitiful face will not change my mind. Anger expressed by the Legislature will not alter my course and an expression of disappointment will not deter me from doing what I determine to do. So enact all of the rules you want and I'm going to start with the presumption that everybody on this floor is acting in good faith since this will