

January 9, 1996

great deal of time in trying to determine what bills should be brought up on the floor and those that should be killed. And what we're doing now is...what we've got in place now is many times an attempt, for various personal reasons, to bring those bills to the floor and spend a lot of time on them. I believe in what Senator Wickersham is trying to do and I'm going to support it because I think that the committee system needs some strengthening and what they do instead of allowing a small number of people to bring those up to the floor. So I'm going to support what he's doing, irregardless of your arguments. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska. Senator Chambers, you're recognized to speak.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, when Senator Vrtiska rose he used the plural in referring to "questions" that he would put to me, but he only put one to me. A senator is allowed to change his mind in midstream, as some people change horses in midstream. Senator Wickersham and Senator Vrtiska, in my scale of values a committee does not speak ex cathedra, or ex "cathadra", however you choose to pronounce it. These committees are composed of people who are very fallible, very flawed, in many instances when bills are killed vindictive, motivated by politics, pressured by lobbyists. I've even had bills delayed as far as when they would be heard because the tobacco industry did not want to deal with a bill, so it came up way toward the end of the session. But I know that's what happens. I know where the pockets of power are in the legislative process. So, by merely conjuring with the term "strengthening committees", I will not be persuaded to go along with what Senator Wickersham is offering, especially when if we drop the first two syllables of his name the third syllable tells us accurately what this is, a sham, it is a wicked sham. And I will tell you why it is a sham. Senator Wickersham is a lawyer. Senator Wickersham not only is trained in the law, but understands the law, and he also knows how to use English well enough to select words to express the idea that he wants to convey. So, if his amendment deals with committees, he knows how to put that into it. But he wants it to deal with any situation in which a bill is killed. And he ought to just be straightforward and say so and stop this red herring about strengthening committees. And there's poor Senator Vrtiska being drawn in his wake. Senator Vrtiska is not