

January 9, 1996

and my remarks have fallen on the side of this being a radical departure from what we currently do. In some ways it is, in other ways it isn't. If you look at the rule there are really only two things that are done here for these major proposals that the Speaker doesn't already have the power to do and even the first one I am going to talk about, the informal ability of the Speaker is probably present to accomplish now anyway. That first thing is requiring the committee action. Keep in mind this does not require favorable committee action, it just requires that a committee will not sit on a bill and delay it indefinitely. That is a power the Speaker does not now have. Formerly my guess is if a Speaker chose to exercise through the powers of persuasion this authority probably would be able to do it now anyway. But, that is one thing this rule does is to be able to hold a committee's chair feet to the fire and say, there is an expectation that you will act and act in this fashion. Not necessarily in this fashion in favorably or unfavorably but this is a major proposal, we want you to have the hearing early and negotiate with the Chair. Point C, which the original draft that Senators Bromm and Will had had printed in the Journal last year did grant far more authority, I think, than maybe what is here now. This is a modification. Determining the scheduling of the proposal, and that is merely a codification which currently exists. The Speaker has had, since I have been here, the ability to special order legislation. I have done it, other speakers have done it, it is acceptable. The body has the ability to override that through its powers of overriding the Speaker's agenda. That is not a new power, that is simply a codification of what currently exists. The key item in this whole thing then comes down to the Speaker's ability to determine the other of amendments and motions to be considered. That is considerably additional authority. It is authority that I would argue, if you want to move to a stronger Speaker system, and a system whereby there is an individual who can take actions to break log jams, that is some authority that you may want to grant to the Speaker. I can point to issues. Last session, I won't get into the specific ones, but over the last several years any number of times when we are involved in a major issue, a major issue that ought to be debated, ought to be kicked around, that the Legislature ought to massage considerably. That there have been cases where we have seen as many as 30-40 amendments on file. Some of which raise minor points, some of which are there for the purposes of delay, which is a legitimate tactic that we employ in this Legislature, and some of which