

January 9, 1996

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yeah, just let me continue. I have one other thought and I'm sorry Senator Coordsen, I did not hear my one minute warning there so I was not wrapping up. I kind of forgot what that one... what that one additional thought is, and yeah, you want to give the Speaker more power and I can't remember what that one additional thought was. So with that, let me... Senator Bernard-Stevens asked if he could use some time. Senator Bernard-Stevens, if you give me a minute at the end to see if I've recovered what I was going to say.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you Senator Withem, it is always a pleasure to help the Speaker out whenever he needs it. I'm going to be, and I think Senator Withem knows my position on this, I'm going to be opposing the Maurstad amendment and also in fact I'm going to be opposing the whole rule change. If I can figure out a way, I would like us to divide the question because I think there is some interesting concepts on the amendment procedure but there is not easy way to do so and I suspect I will have a chance to work on that tonight until tomorrow. This particular portion of the Rules change that gives the position of Speaker, not the individual speaker more authority is not needed in the beginning, number one, because as you all know the Speaker can special order anything at any time. He could special order ten things, or fifty things, he could special order rules, he could special order anything that the Speaker has the courage and feels necessity to do. So, you don't need this rule. You don't have to specify that he can because we already have it, number one. Number two, I get into the portion of granting the Speaker power over committee chair's to kind of force the issue and I understand, it is difficult to understand never having been in that position, but I think I understand the frustration speakers have in dealing with issues that are being held up by committee's. But as the argument of Senator Vrtiska and Senator Wickersham and others talked about the integrity of the committee process, I think that is also part of the process that if a committee has decided to hold a measure for whatever reasons they desire, that should be a part of our process, we should necessarily be able to undo that. Our process has always been in the Unicameral that the Speaker did not have a lot of power and there is a reason for that. The position of Speaker is decentralized in our state and I think positively so so we don't have the problems they have in Washington where a person that has a very strong agenda moves forward and says, I have the power, this is what we are going to