

January 17, 1996

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Will, if you're within the sound of my voice, Senator Dierks has a question for you.

SENATOR DIERKS: Perhaps Senator Matzke would respond.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Matzke, can you respond?

SENATOR MATZKE: I'd be happy to.

SENATOR DIERKS: Through all the discussion, and I really haven't done much discussing myself, but we were talking about increasing the number of priority bills, is that what you want to call it...by five that the Speaker would have? I wondered the necessity of that where we have...he now has 25 priority bills, and he also can special order whatever he wants, I guess, withir reason. What advantage is there with these extra five bills? How does that fit into the potpourri, or whatever you want to call it, of the Speaker's options?

SENATOR MATZKE: Well, I think that the heart of the problem is that the Speaker would be faced with the responsibility, subject to the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Board, to focus the work of the Legislature on five major proposals. It's more of a focus mechanism than actually a priority mechanism. It's not something that the Speaker is going to do individually, it would be his recommendations and, according to the amendment that was made previously, it would have to be approved by two-thirds vote of the Executive Board to focus on the five major p-roposals. And interestingly, the rule refers to major proposals, not just to individual pieces of legislation or individual resolutions. Well, it does say "five bills or resolutions as major proposals".

SENATOR DIERKS: Well, in the case of Micron last year, would that be...I mean we were able to take that issue up, that was a major proposal, as a priority or as a special order. Would that...I guess I'm having trouble figuring out why we need this particular method when we are able to do things like we did with Micron last year. Would you see...I mean, can you see what I'm driving at? I wonder where the difference is? He can still do Micron...or she, whoever is the Speaker, can still do a Micron issue without this rules change. Is that not somewhat similar to a major proposal, and what would be your explanation of that?