

Senators Lindsay, Coordsen, Robinson, Jensen and Brashear.  
(AM4309 is found on pages 1852-53 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Lindsay.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Clerk, are there other amendments filed after that?

ASSISTANT CLERK: No, sir.

SENATOR LINDSAY: This is the last amendment? Then I will go ahead right now and, thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. I will go ahead and take up the amendment, but I have to say I have some concerns with it, after further reviewing it myself. And I have not.... It came up quicker than I anticipated. There is, I think, some alternative language upstairs. And I have not had an opportunity yet to distribute copies of it. But the thrust of the amendment is to require that the Commission of Industrial Relations, when taking...when a case is taken to CIR, to take into consideration the fact that there is a lid, in effect, in setting its rates. The amendment, as it currently stands, also would limit the order or award to the percentage of increase, or the lid, basically. And I have...I've been having some discussions outside, and I will give you, I guess, what I'm...there are two sides to the issue and it's...initially, there is, I think, a compelling case made by the municipalities that when you have a city operating budget that is taken up 68 to 70 percent by labor, large awards from CIR can cause problems if you're operating under a lid. If you have a large increase in the amount of...or your cost of labor, and that's such a...two-thirds or more of your budget, and you have no additional ability to get additional revenue, that does pose some concern. On the flip side, there is a question that if CIR is limited to...limited to the lid, awarding no more than the lid, a percentage increase, that you have effectively taken a large item, I guess, off the negotiating table and disturbed the balance between management and labor in negotiating. The key, I think, in negotiations is to keep tension, enough tension on both sides so as...so that both sides have enough to lose, that both sides have an interest in negotiating a settlement rather than having a settlement imposed upon them by CIR. And as I...and I have had some discussions outside, I guess, with both sides, and I was hoping to have the new language, I guess, come down, 'cause I'm, frankly, on the fence on it, I'm not sure.