

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

January 13, 1999

of things. But from a process point of view, the consent calendar is an appropriate tool. It's in the rules. It's been used successfully. But there is a danger with consent calendar and that's ourselves; that in the urge to be collegial with everybody, we don't look at them as closely. We let things go. We don't read them. Or because we don't want somebody else to look as closely, we choose not to do that. The body works well when people can work together and reach compromise. That's our best mode that we're in in the Legislature. This rule was not used last year. I don't know if people would use it this year. I suppose none of us know that. It depends on the times and it depends on the circumstances. But since Senator Chambers raised the issue of consent calendar, I felt obligated to stand up and voice my concerns about later used consent calendars. That is also a message to those who are outside the Legislature who want to use consent calendar, particularly later on in the session. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Kristensen. Senator Brown, please.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I was one of the sponsors of the amendment that created structured debate and I am more than willing to go along with the will of the body in light of the fact that the process is somewhat cumbersome and was not used last year, but I, for those who don't completely remember it, and for some of the new members, I would like to explain a little bit about the history of this proposal and how we got there. Our highest calling is to pass good legislation, and the way that we arrive at that good legislation is to have good debate on the floor. When you have controversial pieces of legislation and as many as 75 amendments are filed that really do not deal with the substance of the bill, with changing the...changing aspects to make it better, but just deal with striking a particular part of it so that time can be taken, that...that is not really moving us towards the very best kind of legislation. And so it was in response to having seen that happen on fairly important pieces of legislation that...that the whole idea of structured debate came up. And it was a hard-fought battle and, obviously, concessions in terms of the structure ended...the structure of structured debate ended up with a process that was so cumbersome that it