

January 13, 1986

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Rod Johnson, then Senator Rupp. Senator Rod.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members, this is a sensitive subject for those of us, I guess, that are potential victims of the restructuring. Clearly the Agriculture and Environment Committee will be one of those, along with several other committees. But as Senator Haberman has already highlighted to us I think that the deletion or the taking of the environment portion out of the committee certainly will render the committee, I think, very weak, and in fact I don't know how many times you can discuss checkoffs and tractor testing and pseudorabies and those issues ad nauseam before the committee doesn't seem to have any real function. I think the issue that we should be looking at, and I made this point known to Senator Morehead earlier in a letter that she asked the senators to direct to her office in case we did have opinions on this issue, that what we should be looking at rather than the quantity of the legislative bills and how they are dealt with by the committees is rather that the quantity (sic) of bills that come out of that...or the quality of bills that come out of that committee and the work...and the quality of work that is being done by those committees. I would defend the Agriculture and Environment Committee as dealing ambitiously, I think, with the environment issues that are affecting Nebraska. Also I think the problem we have in this system deals with the referencing of the bills. No one is mentioning much about that. Let's face it, you cannot take the politics out of referencing bills. I've been involved in a fight on this floor, along with some others, on LB 284, where that bill should have gone. And I'm sure we've seen fights on this floor and in this body on where particular issues should end up. But clearly you are not going to, under any political restructuring of the committees, you are not going to take the politics out of this whole system. So no matter what structure you use, whether you cut the committee, the Ag Committee or not, you are still going to have those issues that are going to be that in between stage where you are not sure where they should be referenced. Finally, I want to talk about the work of the committee. As Senator Haberman highlighted earlier, I don't think any committee, or any industry utilizes the benefits of the elements of nature than does agriculture. No one depends more directly upon good water, good air, fertile top soil than does agriculture. The