

April 18, 1973

SENATOR PROUD: I'd just like to ask Senator Stahmer a question.

PRESIDENT: Very good, Senator Stahmer, will you yield to a question?

SENATOR PROUD: First of all, I don't understand all there is to know about this but I'm somewhat familiar with caucuses. Do your amendments have anything to do with Superintendent Phelps objection to the bill?

SENATOR STAHMER: It has nothing to do whatsoever with whether he is in favor of it or opposed to it. Well, it has...

SENATOR PROUD: Excuse me, I'm just asking because I have a letter here from him and objecting to a couple of items in the bill and I just wondered if these were the items that he was objecting to is all.

SENATOR STAHMER: Well, I would only, in all honesty, say that if I were the superintendent--I mean if I were he which I'm not, perhaps I might be objecting to the bill in its current form but I think the easiest way to solve this is, Senator Snyder I think was slightly incorrect. The other Class III districts had the option in the past but now the laws are such that all Class IIIs elect their school board members and I don't think any of them caucus. That's my understanding. This is merely treating everyone alike.

SENATOR PROUD: Yes, well, he doesn't want it that way. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, I wondered if Mr. Stahmer would yield to a couple of questions?

PRESIDENT: I'll bet he will.

SENATOR LEWIS: Senator, I'm sorry about that, Senator Burbach. Senator Stahmer, is there some reason to change, has it been ineffective in the past, is it controlled, is that what you're trying to suggest?

SENATOR STAHMER: My own estimation would be that democracy is better served by secret ballots held at large as they are in all other school districts.

SENATOR LEWIS: Now I'm trying to remember, I haven't conferred to be perfectly honest with you, with anybody in 66 on this but as I recall it, the last time two new men were placed on that board over incumbents by the caucus process. So I really can't get at what you're after here unless there is a reason behind it.

SENATOR STAHMER: Well, as you well know when people go to general, or special elections--correction, either a primary election or a general election, we get at least 50% if not 70% of the people participating. So you get 50 to 70% of the people having a voice. When you have a caucus you're probably having 10 to 15% of the people having a voice. Now I think it's better government to have, allow as many people as possible to participate and this is what all the other class III districts do and I think this is admirable. Every other town of any size in the state is now doing it this way.

PRESIDENT: Well--Senator Duis.

SENATOR DUIS: I just need to ask a question of somebody because you know, frankly with this conversation that's been going on, I'm not so sure. Do you mean under this bill as