

March 12, 1980

LB 905

SPEAKER MARVEL: All in favor of that motion say aye, opposed no. The motion carried. The bill is advanced. Thank you, Senator Wesely. We are back to 905. Ready?

CLERK: Yes, sir. Mr. President, LB 905 was considered yesterday. I have pending a motion from Senator Newell, Burrows and Johnson to rerefer the bill to the Revenue Committee.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Johnson, do you wish to be recognized on the motion?

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I am not going to speak on this for very long because I did speak once yesterday but let me make a couple of comments and that is this. The Revenue Committee of this body is the committee that traditionally examines all tax matters including requests for tax exemptions, requests for special allowances and the like. The Revenue Committee in the past has examined this particular matter and found it wanting. I can see no reason why this bill, this request for special tax treatment ought not to be heard by the Revenue Committee. Now the Revenue Committee is not a very popular committee in the Legislature. It has got to make a number of enemies along the way to protect the public fisc and we do it and we do it by carefully examining legislation to see whether or not the request for a special tax treatment is truly warranted and we are a fairly hard-nosed committee. This morning I sat down and I reviewed the bills that we have looked at that we have killed along the way because we could not think that the request for the special tax treatment outweighs the effect on the tax base. For example, we examined the Governor's bill, number 911, to provide sales tax exemption for solar devices. That was Governor Thone's bill. We killed it because of its effect on our tax base. We examined Senator Newell's bill to exempt business equipment from the personal property tax. We killed it. We examined Senator Wesely and Schmit's bill for tax credits for solar energy. We killed it. We examined Senator Kelly's bill to provide sales tax refunds on certain contracts extending over a long period of time. We killed it. We examined Senator Nichol's bill to provide income tax refund for adoption expenses. We killed it. Now it is not easy to kill these bills particularly when the senators that are bringing them in are people that one has to work with regularly, people that one respects, one likes, one enjoys but we have got to do it. We have to do it to protect our tax base. Now 905 is a bill that should have been heard by the Revenue Committee because if the Revenue Committee that has developed over the years the ability to weed out as best it can the wheat