

February 26, 1981

LR 24

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. President and members of the body, I would support the George resolution. I think that my support really draws from my early childhood reading of the Wizard of Oz. I always thought that the Wizard showed remarkable intelligence when the Wizard in dealing with the Cowardly Lion recognized that what the Cowardly Lion really lacked was a medal, a medal for courage; and in dealing with the Scarecrow and the Scarecrow's concern for his loss of brains recognized that what the Scarecrow really lacked was a higher degree, and if he had a higher degree, a degree in Thinkology, then he truly would be an intelligent person in society; and, of course, in dealing with the Tin Woodsman who didn't have a heart, what the Tin Woodsman needed was a certificate, a gold watch, recognizing his philanthropy, that that would show his great charities. It has always seemed to me that one of the best things that we in society can do is to provide some types of paper awards, paper commendations, to individuals who have served because those pieces of paper are of great import and great meaning to the individual, and as an extremely inexpensive and yet very thoughtful way of telling one of our colleagues, irrespective of how they have left our body, volitionally or not so volitionally, thanks for a job well done.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I don't want to belabor the point and sometimes we do things here that are kind of jovial to us but we should consider how the public views it, and although everybody realizes that an honorary doctorate is not one and it is not an earned degree, nevertheless, if we are going to attach that title to it, we should not only debase the currency of honorary doctorates which are given by legitimate educational and other institutions which are more in the business of granting such degrees, we should not make a joke of this particular idea. So if Senator Goodrich is serious, I think he should support Senator Fowler's motion, because if we are insistent on giving one of these things, it shouldn't be, Senator Goodrich, just a piece of paper. It should be a shiny piece of paper, embossed. It should have ribbons. It should have little gold stickers and things on it. You should take a little folder case that is padded in which you put it so it at least looks like something. But were I Senator George, I would think of that line from Shakespeare, "Thou dost damnest...Thou damnest with faint praise." It is just a piece of paper. It doesn't mean anything. Everybody knows it is nothing. Why this is