

March 12, 1981

LB 138

I would like to bring to the attention of the body something I think that Senator Johnson has overlooked, and that basically is that in his bill we still have the prohibition on any expenses that this Legislature might pay itself. And I think that the greatest problem, one of the most difficult problems that we have as legislators and especially for those rural legislators who have much further to drive and have to pay the expenses of living down here and so forth, is, in fact, the expense question. Now I am sure that if we had a salary increase, we would all be better off. Maybe we not having so far to go back and forth to home wouldn't be hurt very bad by that, in fact, I would be helped, but it really doesn't create...it doesn't deal with one of the greatest inequities in this whole area and that is the inequality of cost of service. Now if we were compensated right today for just what it costs to serve, I think it would be one tremendous improvement. Senator Kahle and others have suggested, you know, put the salary at one dollar but give us expenses, and I think that there is some real merit to that. When I first came in, \$400 met my expenses. It does not do that now and I live in Omaha, not that very far away. So I am wondering, Senator Johnson, if that little...that area where you have overlooked to deal with the expense thing isn't one of those major inequities that we really ought to address. How do you feel about that, Senator Johnson?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: In response to Senator Newell's question, his question very simply...he says I have looked at 138 and 138 doesn't reckon with the expense problem, would you like to have that reckoned with? I think the expense problem is unjust and wrong. I chose not to reckon with it in LB 138. I figured I would rather deal one step at a time. I would rather deal with a salary issue, and if we can get that...if the voters will approve of that, then later on go with the expense issue. I also am supporting Senator Chambers' litigation to the question.

SENATOR NEWELL: Well, I think that Senator Chambers' point is correct. If we have no problem and Senator Chambers' bill passes and the Supreme Court upholds it, we have no problem. If, on the other hand, there is a problem there and I am no lawyer so I can't make these solid sort of understandings of these things, but if there is a problem, then we will have dealt with the salary thing and yet still have the major inequity of expenses still to be dealt with and I think if the