

SPEAKER MARVEL: You want to withdraw the other?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: . . . Journal, yes.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay, hearing no objections so ordered.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body I have a couple of amendments that I would like to have adopted today. This first amendment that is coming out is, I think, a very innocuous amendment. It is being handed out by the Pages. It is an amendment that just says simply that a juvenile must be tried, and the hearing is called an adjudication hearing. He must have his adjudication hearing within six months after the petition in juvenile court has been filed. Now as you probably recall we have in our criminal code a speedy trial provision. Our criminal law says that everybody who has been charged with a felony must be tried within six months after that charge has been filed, otherwise the case will be dismissed. As you recall the purpose of a speedy trial provision is in the furtherance of justice to make certain that anyone who has been apprehended for a crime knows right now that they are going to come to trial right away. They are not going to have dust gather on their cases or cobwebs develop on the evidence but it is going to be tried right now. In fact, the speedy trial provision that we have in our criminal code has worked quite well to bring a number of accused persons to the bar of justice. Very quickly, you have got six months prosecutors to do it in, otherwise the case is dismissed. Now there are exceptions under the criminal statutes to the speedy trial provisions if in fact the defendant has requested delays and the delays are for a good cause, then the six months doesn't count. But those exceptions are exceptions. All I am doing in our juvenile code is saying, I want the same thing to apply in context to juvenile cases. I think simply that an adjudication ought to be done within six months after the petition is filed. I happen to be involved in a case, I have withdrawn from that case because I am down here, but I was involved with a case where the petition alleging my client's child to be a neglected child was filed in September and as of today's date the case has not yet come up for trial. That is far more than the six months period of time. Now I frankly think it is wrong to keep parents and children just hang and fire. I think the cases ought to be prepared and brought to trial quickly. That is all this amendment does. It is a simple amendment to make certain that you have to proceed to an