

March 5, 1990

Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, the Committee on Natural Resources met relative to the appointment of Dr. Norman Thorson as a Nebraska representative to the Central Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission. Dr. Thorson was first appointed in 1988 and is presently serving as the Chairman of the Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission. He was preceded in that position by Mr. Dennis Grams who is the Director of our Environmental Control. You will recall, I believe it was last session, we introduced a bill which allowed someone other than the Director of the Environmental Control Commission to serve in that position and the appointment of Dr. Thorson to that position was in response to that legislative activity. Dr. Thorson is a native of my legislative district of Wahoo, Nebraska, and the Mead area. He was born and raised in that area. His parents were farmers in that area. His mother still resides there and his brothers, and I have known the family for many years. Dr. Thorson brings to the commission a fine level of expertise. He brings to the commission dedication and devotion and I think, very frankly, he brings to the commission the kind of personality that is important in a job which is frequently controversial. The committee had a series of questions which we sent to Dr. Thorson relative to certain activities and certain actions that were of some concern to us. Dr. Thorson responded to those questions and I have made them available to committee members. I'm willing to make them available to anyone else who wants them, but I just want to say at this time that we have gone through in Nebraska a very traumatic period. I have said on this floor many times that probably none of us at the time that we embarked on this road were aware of exactly where we were going. I have also pointed out to you that I accept responsibility for the lack of some of that information. We did, however, accept what I consider to be the responsible role. We did that which was mandated to us by the Congress and we did it according to the time table which was mandated to us. The individuals, such as Dr. Thorson, who have been brought on board are simply carrying out the mandates of this Legislature as directed by the Congress. From time to time this Legislature, the Governor of this state and others have taken a certain amount of criticism for our role in this activity. It is a sort of a strange situation that none of this criticism, to my knowledge, has extended back to the Congress which at first mandated the program and I'm not suggesting that it should. The Congress, I am sure, acted in what they thought