

March 5, 1990

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the body, since we've had lunch now maybe some of us have kind of forgotten where we were in the discussion. But my...I want to tell you the reason that I voted against the suspension rule that was offered by Senator Hefner and allowing us to proceed to the vote, was for the specific reason that I feel that this is an important enough issue. Heavens knows we've spent a couple of days on many other issues in this session. I think this issue is important enough that we should not allow anyone in here to feel they have not had ample opportunity to discuss this total issue. For that reason, my vote was...I know, for some of you, you would have liked to have seen it...the debate close and get onto something else, but I know it's important to a lot of people, it should be important to all of us as citizens of the State of Nebraska. But what I want to do is summarize just a little bit for those of you that think we haven't had enough discussion, or that we've been proceeding blindly, or that we haven't looked at this issue carefully enough. I just want to summarize a little bit about how much this has been studied, heard, debated and so on. First of all, in this short session alone I can tell you that we had a confirmation hearing that lasted about two and a half hours on this very same person that we're talking about right now. And, at that time, we had large numbers of those people who were in opposition, as has already been talked about earlier today, there to testify. We then have had also numerous low-level radioactive waste bills in this committee during this session. Those people were there to testify. And, again, we heard, I'm sure, a lot of discussion about Thorson, himself; Thorson was there, Dr. Thorson was there at those...when we had some of these things. So he has been testifying. Those people have had an opportunity a number of times to express themselves that way. I have, myself, personally, and I know many of the others of you, particularly in the areas where we have the...where the sites were being tested, have had numerous town hall meetings. Those folks were there, welcome to testify or not...not exactly to testify, but to question, to provide their input, their concerns and so on. In addition to that, I know that personally, myself, and I'm sure many of you have had way more than I have, individuals in my office talking about this issue, groups in my office talking about this issue; discussion through letters, telephone conversations, we have had tapes available to us, which were made available, by the way, last year on this issue, because I know, I'm the one that made them available over in the lounge. So there was an opportunity for anyone that wanted to go across