

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

May 25, 1999

LR 5

SENATOR C. PETERSON: Thank you, Senator Kristensen. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Madam President, members of the Legislature, as Lyndon Johnson would often say, my "fella" Americans, I come before you today with a heavy heart. I have listened to "Deacon" Jones suggest that we are not worth \$2,000 of salary per month for the hard work that we do. It reminds me of days many, many years ago, Senator Jones, when you gave haircuts by using a chisel and a hammer, that let's you know how long ago it was, but barbers were trying to get all of the barbers together to agree to raise our prices from something like 75 cents to a dollar. One old guy was in a shop and he said 75 cents was plenty and, in fact, 35 cents would be enough, and one of the younger barbers looked at him and said, well, I guess every barber knows what his worth is work...what his work is worth. One problem that we have as legislators is that we sell ourselves short, we play ourselves cheap. We pass bills to raise the salaries of state employees. I have even offered bills to raise the salary of constitutional officers and I'll do so next session should I not be in the crematorium at that time. You all got such a kick out of that I want to repeat it, because it seems to help your digestion. We have increased the salary of judges. We passed two bills this session to do that. Until the Legislature begins to regard itself in terms of the very important work that we do, nobody else is going to. You cannot get a job by going up to whoever you expect to employ you and say, I need a job but I'm not sure if I can do it, but if you're really nice, and I don't know any reason you have to be nice to me, I would like you to consider, although I don't know why you should because nobody else does, giving me a job, but nobody else has ever given me a job because they didn't think I was fit for one, but, despite the fact that nobody else thinks I'm fit for a job and I probably can't do this work well, I hope you'll give me a chance to take this one and I hope I won't mess up, but I probably will because I've been a mess-up all my life. And then when you don't get the job you say, good night, nobody wants to hire me. Members of the Legislature, the Legislature is the most powerful branch of government. The hand that feeds is the hand that controls. We let the Governor kick us around. On occasion we let the Judiciary show contempt for us and our