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and all were justified, I don't believe that I have every met a more humble man

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in his own rights than John Neihardt. I was shocked as all of you were to learn of his sudden passing. Certainly Nebraska is not as well off as it was when John Neihardt dwelled, worked, and wrote among us. I think that it is entirely fitting and I thank the Legislature for calling this official tribute today. As Governor of the state of Nebraska I just want to honor him in some humble way as I am sure that John would have liked to have been honored here today. Therefore I emphasize once again that with all of his talent, I have never met a man that would be more humble, nor a man in his own right that had the right to be proud of the contribution that he made to his state and his nation. Were all of us in our contributions to our society would be as dedicated, humbler and as true a great Nebraskan as was our beloved John Neihardt. May God keep him, and rest his soul in the eternal memory of what he did for all of us.

PRESIDENT: Thank you Governor Exon. Next it is with a great deal of pleasure, a personal pleasure I might add, that I bring to the microphone former Governor Val Peterson a family friend, and former US Ambassador to Denmark and Finland. Governor Peterson.

FORMER GOVERNOR PETERSON: Mr. Speaker, Lt. Governor of Nebraska, and Governor Exon, Governor of the State and members of the Senate, Ladies and Gentlemen. In thinking about this occasion I got to wondering the other day just how did John Neihardt become Poet Laureate in 1921? My memory is not quite good enough to remember that. I didn't have time to look it up. I was wonder what Senators, or what members of the house or both placed the resolution for...or the statute which ever it was I'm not familiar with that up for consideration in this chamber. Then I got to wondering with even more curiosity I wonder who was behind it, who was doing the pushing on the Senatorial, or House of Representatives people. Because there is always something behind anything that happens in the Legislature, sometimes a lot of people are behind it. Never-the-less I would like to congratulate the Nebraska Legislature meeting the eternal Legislature that goes on for year to year for over a hundred years in our state for having the foresight and the wisdom in cultural matters to designate a poet laureate in 1921 and then for having the wisdom to let that poet laureate sit there throughout the years because while we may have had some other good poets, I'm certain that we have had none of the statute during that period of time of John G. Neihardt because as a matter of fact America hasn't. He has taken his place now among one of the great poets in the history of the world. Any man that can have one of his books selected out of 3,000 covering a period of history of 3,000 years certainly has hit the top for writers. I have also been thinking in the last few days that Nebraska has probably come of age, a sense of maturity has come over this state. I measure that in these terms as we are now beginning to look back at our past and see where we came from and who we are, and how we measure up with other peoples of the United States and the world. To me this is a sign of maturity. How is it evident in Nebraska? Well for many years now we have been busy creating foundations to recognize people like Willa Cather out in Chadron and western Nebraska a movement is on, an active