

April 24, 1979

it and I know a number of the members of the Committee on Committees voted against it although finally after about three weeks Mr. Johnson's name did come up again and was passed on. Mr. Johnson is the General Manager of NETV, is it Senator Cope...NETV in Kearney, Nebraska. Mr. Johnson annually harrasses and harangues the Legislature for being incompetent, for doing a poor job in its work, which is certainly a prerogative that he's entitled to make, and in no way do I want to say that this body should try and muzzle a responsible press, and I use the word responsible because that's the key. As I've said, every year Mr. Johnson annually attacks this body for what he considers to be some negligent actions on its part. I think the particular point that I want to bring up this morning is that Mr. Johnson very often acts in an irresponsible manner himself. For example, in an editorial this year where he harangued the Legislature for spending too much time on the sales tax on food issue, that was written and presented before the issue ever came up. We did not debate the sales tax on food, if I can refresh your memory up until just about I think it was a week ago, a week and a half ago at most, and then we spent part of a morning doing it, and yet Mr. Johnson in his editorial harangues the Legislature, chastises the Legislature, says that we're incompetent because we've wasted several days on the issue of the sales tax on food. Again, in fact, the issue never came before this body. I think that's irresponsible journalism. When I discussed this matter with him at the public hearing he said, well, gee I guess I made a mistake and I sure am sorry. I said, well do you think that's responsible journalism? You know, what about the fact that you've already made this statement to the people, you know, in your viewing area? How can you accept that type of method? How can you stand behind that type of journalism? He said, well, I don't know, I guess one of the reporters made a mistake. I guess I just feel that this body does make errors, but we're certainly not perfect. Nobody that I know is, but I don't feel that since we're up for public scrutiny that if we're going to be chastised that it should be done in a responsible manner. I'm not convinced in my mind that Mr. Johnson has the best interests of the citizens of Nebraska. I think that he's really more interested in selling advertising, that he's more interested in reporting sensational news. I do understand that since Mr. Johnson came up that a number of members of this body have met with him, have discussed the situation. He appears at least on the surface to have mellowed because he is...actually he's tried to buy us is what I think he has done, because he

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