

CLERK: 27 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of Senator Johnson's amendment to the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: The Vard Johnson amendment is adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I'm going to ask that you advance the bill. Now the bill calls for a homestead exemption of \$15,000 per house. There are 280,000 homesteads in the State of Nebraska. There are a lot of...The average value, incidentally, of the house in Nebraska for tax purposes is, I believe it is \$38,000. My memory might be a little dim on that. But I think that is about what it is. So what will happen is with a \$15,000 homestead exemption we will simply lower the average homeowners property taxes about 50 percent. That will be the amount that we will lower the average homeowners property taxes. Obviously there are some houses in our state that are worth \$15,000 or less. Those people will pay no property taxes on their houses. There are some houses in our state that are worth \$150,000 in which case this bill will not make a great dent on their taxes. Now the farming and ranching community doesn't like this bill because the farming and ranching community says this bill is targeted to the urban homeowner. Well, you know, farmers and ranchers own houses that receive homestead exemption. They get homestead exemptions, so their houses don't...they will have the same...the same thing will happen to them under this bill as will happen to the homeowner in Omaha, Nebraska, or Lincoln, Nebraska, or Grand Island, or Beatrice, or what have you. In addition, and I want the senators to understand and recognize this, we are treating agricultural land in a special way in our state to keep those taxes at a reasonable level. But we are not treating residences in the same fashion. We have simply allowed the residences in our state to carry a disproportionate amount of the tax load. Furthermore, there will be businesses who will complain. There will be businesses who complain and say you know the homeowner got tax relief, but the business didn't get tax relief. Well, doggone it, the businesses have gotten tax relief over the years by our taking business inventory off the tax rolls. That is a big ticket item we took off the tax rolls. Did we take homes off the tax rolls? No, ma'am,