

experience two years ago when there was a horrendous double digit inflation, double digit inflation, and I could not get this body to say that the alcohol tax, even though I handed out graphs, charts, etcetera, etcetera, was not keeping up with inflation. I could talk to you a lot today and give you statistics and probably should have, it looks, on why all alcohol imbibers should participate in paying a tax of which partially will repay the taxpayers of Nebraska. Excessive alcohol drinking by pregnant mothers causes birth defects which we house in our state institutions. We have talked a lot about driving while intoxicated and the costs that the state and the taxpayers as well as individuals and hospitals and institutions across our state suffer. Child alcoholism that was referred to earlier, that is not caused by getting a child drunk. That is caused by giving a child liquor or beer, a sip of beer day by day, getting them used to it, getting them in the habit. My constituents also answered a questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly in favor of raising the alcohol tax and I imagine quite a few of my constituents are alcohol drinkers, in fact, I would bet a good majority of them. But they say, yes, put the tax on the alcohol. Now we talked to you about the compromise and, Senator Beutler, I thought you very well knew that politics is the art of compromise. I keep hearing that from your compromises and from others on the floor and don't tell me that any of you haven't. I spoke to you earlier about the gentleman's agreement that I had no knowledge of when Senator Kahle and I introduced a bill like this. Believe me, that is the most frustrating offensive kind of agreement because you can't put your finger on it. You don't know who is participating or why they are not voting for an increase in alcoholism. It is the unspoken, unwritten, unspeakable power.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR PIRSCH: So why do we tax this industry so much?

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Will raising the tax one cent on a can of beer discourage people from drinking? Will raising beer a penny put a bar owner out of business? As a matter of fact, it could be a boost. He will probably raise it a nickel and make four cents on the can. I urge that you again it is time to have a raise in the alcohol taxes, in fact, it is