

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: ...when we actually can go forward and say, hey, we can make changes. We can cut spending and we can also make certain functional changes in the way we spend to have a more efficient, a leaner government. And if, in fact, this body wants to make certain that the state has the same level of construction, it can simply appropriate to that level and the gas tax will increase. Horrors! It's not a horror, it's simply a user fee and if you want the increase we can allow the increase. I'm lowering the construction level in my amendment. I am not doing something that is not being done in most of our sister states. Most of our sister states have the highway patrol funded out of the user fee. This is not un-American, antidemocratic, it's good government.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Scofield, please.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I hate to follow an oration like that, but I have to rise and oppose this amendment. Senator Lamb has already emphasized the importance of a good road system to our agricultural economy. I don't think I can improve on what he said. Senator Warner has reiterated the importance to the total economic development to the state. We all know what a problem rural transportation has become and we all know, any of us who attempt to travel across the state, the only way to get there from here and back are our roads. The air service is not adequate and we certainly don't have rail service and so it is absolutely critical that we not erode funds from something as important as our road system in this state. Meritorious as Senator Johnson's attempt might be to do this, I just have to oppose it. One of the members of this body has said more eloquently than I, that if you drive an old car you have to have smooth roads and since I also fit that category I would strongly oppose anything that might affect the future of our road system in the state of Nebraska. Next week we will celebrate National Tourism Week and I believe that is currently the third most important industry in our state which Senator Sieck has alluded to and again, to bring people into northwest Nebraska which is a prime tourism area, we need roads that don't embarrass us when people drive across the Wyoming border or the South Dakota border or the Colorado border or when those of you from the east attempt to drive out and I would see this