

February 27, 1986 LB 1029

SPEAKER NICHOL: Time.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: It is for that reason that I think that LB 1029 should continue to remain indefinitely postponed.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you, Senator Johnson. Senator Harris, please, then Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR HARRIS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I, too, will keep my remarks as brief as possible. You've all heard the arguments. There are some things that I would like to speak to in the sense of making the record correct, setting the record straight. Number one, the idea of us spending time on this has been criticized. I guess maybe I can't see why talking about the fact that thousands of Nebraskans cannot have access to \$67 million plus interest is something that is a waste of our valuable time, and raise that as an argument. I can't understand why that can be raised as a reason for us not discussing it. Remember that. There are \$67 million, plus interest, in this particular institution that is unreachable by people who are aged, who are dying, who are ill, who need the money. So I would, first of all, point out that this is a very important topic, not only to those individuals, but to this state. Number two is in regard to the settlement, the 8.5 million settlement. There were a lot of people that told us that that would not be attained also from the beginning. It was attained. But that settlement was based on a report that was put together by the special committee. And I don't want to bring up old news, or bad news, but, folks, there were criminal activities going on over there for a long time. You know that. I know that and, if you didn't know it before, you know it now because of the revelations by Dr. Breiner. If you have ever read the original report put out on Commonwealth, after it first closed they had a quote in there by Paul Amen who said that he could have closed because of criminal activity, could have closed and taken the license away from S.E. Copple, close the institution as far back as 1981, taken it over. But then the house of cards would have fallen in, as the quote goes. So these people were used, as Senator Sieck said, for a public purpose. That puts it in a different category. I just want to close with this. I think at the very least, you know you've heard the issue, you know how you are going to vote. It is not an unconstitutional thing to use a building as