

year, I would ask you that if you were paying your own personal staff out of your own pocket, would you provide a 3 percent salary increase? I want to make one other point clear, there have been comments that we will have difficulty in negotiation, that there will be widespread numbers of people who will leave. I am aware of the fact that there are always individuals who can better themselves and I don't know what you can do about that. I want to point out one more thing, that for a number of years I tried to enact a bill into law that would have brought more money into state government and I wanted to do so at a time when the economy was in much better condition than it is today. I was not able to get that bill passed into law. Had those kind of statutes been drafted six, seven, eight years ago, we well might not be in the fiscal crunch we are in today. At a time when the entire economy is floundering, at a time when businesses and industry are showing severe strains, at a time when all other entities of government are facing the same serious concerns that we are, I think it does not show, it does not show good management for us to say that we are going to increase the salaries of state employees by 3 percent regardless of how it impacts upon the rest of the economy. I want to say another thing and that is this, if this economy should turn around, and I can tell you very frankly I think it can turn around, there are some positive factors out there, and I think that if we were to change our attitude in some areas and do some things differently, take control of our own destiny, for example, I think we could turn it around. I have been accused of getting up here and berating the federal government from time to time and not unjustifiably so. But I want to say that the policies of the federal government have been directly responsible for the situation in which we find ourself here today and I want to say one more thing, and I have discussed this only recently with Senator Bill Harris and I hope he will comment upon it, the policy of the federal government today in relation to agriculture, if it is continued, will further deteriorate the economic situation of the Nebraskans and the State of Nebraska and the state employees' own financial situation in the years to come. We are locking in, we are locking in at great cost to taxpayers, guaranteed poverty for Nebraska agriculture. And there are those who a few years ago said, in fact, we heard it stated, in fact, we saw it in print, a very eloquent economist said, it doesn't make any difference what happens to the income of Nebraska farmers because they don't pay any income tax anyway.