

of dollars for other subdivisions of government. I want to call your attention to one more fact. Most of those subdivisions of government must rely heavily upon property taxes. Most of those subdivisions of government have found that this state either has or will reduce our contribution to their budgets. Yet at the same time, by indirection we are saying you must also raise salaries for your employees. You contribute to disrest, disunity, among our employees. I know it is very difficult, I know it is difficult within this body to give one employee a raise and not another. It is also difficult between various entities to give one entity a raise and not another. I want you to remember one thing, if you vote against this proposal, that you are voting not to distribute the money we have, you are voting to distribute money you hope to collect by increasing the tax rates on the taxpayers of the State of Nebraska. I suggest the public employees of this state are well aware, totally aware of the economic conditions of this state, and I would suggest that if the members of this body are not aware, that we should become aware. We should become aware because we are going to otherwise place those taxpayers into an additionally difficult position. Now it is easy for us to say, well, that is only a few million dollars, it doesn't amount to that much, but we have seen it happen time after time after time that we will live to regret it. I would suggest that what has happened thus far is not the end of the economic crisis that faces this state, that we will see continued decline in the economy unless some dramatic reversal occurs which is not visible on the horizon at this time. I do not pretend to have the knowledge that the Budget Committee has relative to the pay proposals. I know they have worked hard on this but I want to call it to your attention because I think that it is a mistake to advance LB 1250 with the present salary levels included in there. If this amendment is not successful, I have another one which I will offer but I would hope you would consider it seriously and I would hope that other members of this body would rise and speak to the amendment, either for or against, because the time will come when you are going to have to stand up and vote for the funds that cover this expense. I would suggest that the employees of this state are not overly paid but they are paid, in my estimation, a fair wage. Now we have a study which says they are below the competitive salary in business and industry. Well, let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, go out and visit your local community and find how competitive those salaries are. There are some salaries that are somewhat isolated from the other business sector, but those salaries that are in the business sector are not increasing as we would like