

industries and consumer goods prices. We have become economically interdependent with the remainder of the world. Nowhere is this linkage more apparent than in the food and energy industries. Closer to home the texture of American life has been reweven by shifting patterns of demographics. The post-World War II baby boom generation has matured. The birth rate has declined. And thankfully, life expectancy has increased. This so-called greying of America has far-reaching implications for government as the demand for services, such as child care, nursing homes, health care, and social security increases. Government must, therefore, be aware of demographic information in its long-term planning. We face a grave immediate fiscal situation. We have been forced to use a number of measures, including the lapsing of cash funds and interfund borrowing. But, like any other problem, this one can be remedied if we work together. Initially we must prioritize the functions of this state government, making more efficient and effective those functions to which we ascribe primary importance, and reducing or eliminating those to which we assign a lower priority. In this way we will pay only for those necessary facets of government which we can afford under realistic tax rates. The agenda set forth today is a rigorous one which demands not only good intentions but considerable skill and expertise. We would, therefore, be remiss to reduce our investment in education. A short-term cost saving would be repaid with lower productivity and a declining standard of living. Education is the conservative commitment of those of us who believe that it is the people who solve our problems. Minimal government begins with education because we are giving people the tools to do the job themselves.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Half minute.

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: Education is also the means by which we pursue equality. Through universal education we are attempting to give all people equal opportunity for the pursuit of happiness. At the same time I will encourage our learning institutions in their efforts to heighten appreciation and understanding of the rich cultural literary and artistic heritage we Nebraskans share. As the future rushes toward us, an understanding of the roots from which we grew is indeed valuable.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Time is up.

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: Let us remember in the months ahead that