

budget went back into those areas for the most part, with the exception of mental retardation where you have the strongest lobbying forces, where you have, yes, a great need, but also the most capable individuals insofar as extracting money from the taxpayers of the state is concerned. When you increase the sales tax you take from those who are least able to pay and you take it from those people who pay it bit by bit and, therefore, do not feel it so badly, but it is the most regressive tax we have. I would suggest that we have not addressed the issue well. And I would suggest that I recognize what has been going on. We are going to hear other comments here before these last two days are over about how we need to hold down the cost on this bill or that bill, how we can't afford this or that. Let me tell you that this is not the last of the issue. I predict that given some major catastrophe that might yet occur, that might boost the economy, that we will see further degradation in the economy, and with that, further deterioration in the supply of funds. When that occurs you are going to come back and have to make some of the same hard choices that we made last year, not once but twice. And once again when we do that some of us who had our favorite projects included this time will be disallowed. So then it will become again each time a smaller and smaller circle until there will be only those that are very powerful, very influential that will remain untouched. It has happened year, after year, after year. And I know we hear a lot of talk about responsibility in government. And I can make as good a speech about that as anyone can. I had bills here on this floor, I had bills in committees that would have addressed that at a time when we had the resources, when the economy was improving and growing. But at a time when the economy is not growing we have not yet dedicated funds to those areas that will make this economy boom. I think it is wrong to do those things that we have done. I've said it before. I think it was a total error on the part of this Legislature and on the part of the Governor to include a 3 percent salary increase for state employees, far better to have reduced that. And I can be called a Scrooge, if you like, but I have faced people day after day, in the last two or three months, who have lost their farms, their businesses, they are losing their homes. And when you go back home and tell them that you must, to be fair, increase state spending for wages, I suggest you go back to my area. Go back to most of the businesses...businessmen and women you deal with and tell them you cannot fill those jobs, and it is not fair not to give state employees a wage increase, when you have negative inflation. Try to explain that to the million five hundred some thousand people out there who do not draw a state