

already been said, but just to get us back on the track I'll repeat a couple of them and I think the most important one of all was Senator Vard Johnson who said, this is a shift, simply shifts money from one fund back to the General Fund and that is just not the way to accomplish this. There seems to be a lot of sentiment that we ought to get the Roads Department and that's a separate issue and we can argue, I suppose, and should argue what eventually should be our policy and are we spending too much or are we spending too little. In my opinion, we are spending too little for roads right now, but that is not the central issue right now. The central issue is, as has been pointed out, if you're going to do this kind of an activity, it should be done in such a way that it is understandable to the voter and, frankly, doing it this way does not make it that easy to understand. And the second thing, it may give us the impression that we're really solving some kind of problem here and we're not. What we need is either to cut or to raise revenue and this really doesn't do either one. So we need to start with that kind of premise. If you look at the kinds of needs we have in this state right now, and the extreme concern we have for our economy and the need for economic development and you look at the cost for roads, what it costs to build a road today, what it costs to maintain a road, what it costs you if you put off the maintenance of those roads, and then if you look at the kinds of trends, the kinds of things that are happening in the road business, aside from whether you think the money may be using as best as it can be or as efficiently as it can be, the fact of the matter is, the money available at the federal level has been declining. It is expected to continue to decline and yet what could possibly be more important to our economy than a decent, not a decent, better than a decent system of roads and I don't want to get into that right now. I want to talk about, more or less, just the assumptions that are flawed in this particular proposal. It seems like any sympathy that this bill might have is based on the idea that everybody should share the misery. Well I would suggest to you that right now everybody is going to share the misery called across the state and it is time for us to talk about priorities, what is important to the State of Nebraska, what kinds of activities we should take and, in fact, there is probably some wisdom, very much some wisdom in the past when the decision was made to earmark these funds because that Legislature obviously recognized the importance and the connection of a good road