

give a really grand and glorious rationale for cigarettes as opposed to nylon stockings, or fur coats, or what have you. I think, however, that in a free society such as ours that allows harmful drugs to be ingested by people, whether they be alcohol or cigarettes, that one of the prices that we exact of the consumers of those harmful drugs is that they pay a significant price in tax dollars. In other words there is kind of a trade-off.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: We legalize the commodity, we are not prohibitionists, we are not antitobacconists, but at the same time we say there is a stiff price for the ingestion of the drug. In addition there is good social rationale for keeping the cost of cigarettes high. The social rationale is that the higher the price the less likely teenagers are to consume the cigarette. The less likely teenagers are to consume the cigarette, the fewer teenagers become addicted. Studies have demonstrated that the older smoker, the man or woman who starts at 22 or 23, is less likely to become addicted to cigarettes than the teenager. Teenagers have very little discretionary income. The higher the price of the teenager the fewer cigarette addicts will arise.

SENATOR RUPP: I appreciate that comment. I still have problems with the bill, Senator Johnson. Quite honestly we are framing the issue more as a public health and welfare issue than a revenue issue. It perhaps should have gone to Senator Wesely's committee.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Time.

SENATOR RUPP: I thank you for the answers in any event.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Schmit, then Senator Haberman.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you. I'm going to rise against the...speak against the bill. I'm not going to speak on those terms which Senator Johnson described so eloquently because I believe that if we are going to describe it on the basis of a health issue, then the tax ought to be prohibitive. Having had a little bit of experience with children, ten in number in my own family, I have found out that they usually have the resources for those items they want to spend money on, even though some necessities may go