

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: I will if you like, I mean I will elaborate if you'd like for me to do that, Senator Nelson, but I don't want to take your time.

SENATOR NELSON: Please, for my...I'm not...I'm just trying to straighten this out in my mind. I'm thinking in terms of when we had the bill the other day for unemployment insurance and so on, I have reservations on the amount of this bill, but I'm not being contradictory or anything else. If you would please help me.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Senator Nelson, those are absolutely legitimate questions. They have been discussed many times by a lot of people who know a lot more on the subject than do I. There is a...every poor person in our society will receive food stamps and those food stamps certainly have a cash benefit. Probably the average value of the food stamp to a Nebraska consumer or to the Nebraska ADC recipient is about \$115 a month. In addition, all ADC recipients will be eligible under our own standards for Medicaid and again, the average...I can't give you the average value on that because it depends on whether or not one is sick. So that's a noncash benefit that they would receive. In addition, if a community has a subsidized housing program which not every community does have, ADC recipients may avail themselves of that program as well as other low income people. That is known as the Section 8 program, and again, the value of that is dependent to a large extent on whether the community or landlords make it available, but let me hypothesize a reasonable value in the neighborhood of \$70 a month. I think those are the primary noncash benefits available to ADC recipients. Now there have been in the last ten years there have been a variety of books published by very conservative thinkers such as George Gilder who would suggest that the value of these noncash benefits has had a fairly dramatic effect of lifting people out of poverty. That issue has been hotly debated as to the (a) the value of the benefits and (b) poverty definitions, (c) the targeting of those benefits and the like. And the truth of the matter is that in the last five years in particular with changes in Congress the value of benefits has eroded dramatically. Medicare is down 10 percent. Medicaid. Medicaid is down 10 percent in value. Food stamps are off about 10 percent in value. We have...a number of children have been moved out of the ADC program. For example, we used to provide ADC benefits to children who were in college or voc-tech schools