

April 8, 1981

LB 40

reason I think that time should not be lengthened out. One other thing I would like to say while I have the floor and I think it relates to what we are talking about, is the fact that many people over the state and some of our press people wonder why in the world, for instance, I, as a rural Senator, am concerned with the Omaha sales tax, and why we just don't let Omaha vote what they want and let it go at that. My whole interest in this is that I do think that we need more sales and income tax into the tax picture across the State of Nebraska in every community. And I feel that if we allow Omaha to solve their financial problems before we get the rest of them solved across the state, that we are not going to have the strength in this Legislature to do anything. That is the reason I am so interested in the Omaha sales tax and I am not interested in extending the time that far. I think that 1983 is too far. I agree with Senator Chambers' first statement that 1982 would be a better date. It would put us under pressure to get the job done. The longer time we give ourselves to do something, the longer it takes. I think a good example is this very Legislature. We are not in too big a hurry yet but just wait a couple weeks. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I rise in opposition to the Hoagland amendment. I rise in opposition to the DeCamp amendment. When I came down here in 1979, one of the first issues that I had to deal with as a member of the Revenue Committee was the extension of the Omaha half cent sales tax. At that time the Mayor of the City of Omaha had told the Legislature the year earlier that we only needed a half cent sales tax for one year and that was it to take care of a temporary situation. He was wrong. Whether he lied to the body or whether he just misrepresented the facts unwittingly and unknowingly, it is frankly totally and absolutely unimportant. He was wrong. Omaha needed to have the additional one-half cent sales tax and that became quite clear to me as a member of the Revenue Committee in 1979 as I looked at our half cent sales tax bill at that time. The longer I am a member of this Legislature, the clearer it does become that Omaha needs to have the additional...needs to have the authority to levy an additional half cent sales tax and with that authority will so levy the additional half cent sales tax. The City of Omaha is financially in extremis. It has the highest property tax in Douglas County, the highest property tax levy in the State of Nebraska. It is taxing its taxpayers far more extensively than any other portion of the state, and that is notwithstanding our having a one and a