

the Legislature was able to provide \$40 million of tax relief plus the fact that the State Board of Equalization had been able to return to the citizens of this state over \$60 million of taxes because of a reduction of corporate income tax. Well, I think this is very noble but I am also bothered by the fact that the Governor did see fit to suggest that at least we should give to the schools a seven percent increase to try to minimize the cost of inflation and cost of doing business. Last year according to the Nebraska State Tax Research Council when we provided back to the schools the \$40 million there was indeed a reduction of property taxes but I submit to you with what we see at the federal government level in a letter I handed out to you this morning, you are going to see a considerable burden of responsibility placed upon the schools to carry out programs unless they are willing to completely dismantle them or forget them or cut staff. Now I remind you when you cut staff you are dismantling a program right now. The public schools are like a major business in this state with a product that we always consider to be very precious and the job is to educate every child to the best of their ability to learn to become a productive citizen. It is very interesting to me that every year we stand here and I wish you would recall this. Last year we were debating \$60 million to state aid. There were those who said we don't have it. It is not there. It has never been there since I have been here and yet we constantly end up with surpluses and constantly we cut back and then we take great credit for the fact that we gave back to the people some dollars in corporate income tax. And I would submit to you that this may trigger an increase. It may but I am not sure it will trigger an increase. Last year if we'd have given \$60 million back, and we all know we can now, because some way or another we were deceived about the surpluses, we probably could have foregone this effort this year but some way or another they have magically found money to return to people, didn't they? And you all know this. So they become heroes and one more time you and I become the victims and all the time, and I remind you of this since I have been here, the Legislature has assumed the responsibility, absolutely assumed the responsibility to try to reduce the burden upon property taxes for the cost of public education. We seldom get that credit and I often say to my friends outside, if it wasn't for the Legislature, I wonder where public education would be in terms of its problems. We solve those problems financially and every other way. I think it is time for bold action again on our part to say to the public schools we will try to minimize the ravages of inflation, we will try to minimize the increased cost upon property tax. We can't do it all but at least we are going to show you that we are acting in good faith to the best of our ability.