

April 1, 1982

LB 761

are additional federally funded projects that are being reconsidered to see if they are actually needed, one was a VA Hospital construction program. And what the Director of the VA said in Washington is that they are reconsidering all of these projects in order to determine whether they are really needed, or if they are being built as a sop to local politicians, and for those of you who are so anxious and interested in this that you are holding your breath for what this guy said, I am going to read something to you. "Does it make new sense to spend \$280 million for a replacement VA hospital in Minneapolis where we have got 2000 empty beds already there, and where you have got a declining veteran population?" This is the Director of the VA speaking. He said VA medical sites always have been selected on a political basis with little consideration of whether shifts in veterans' population soon would make them unneeded. He spoke of the irrationality involved in selecting these sites and said that these selection programs needed to have credibility infused into them and the best way to do that he said is to answer this question, which comes down to this, are we building for the veteran to meet his needs or are we building for some other purpose? And if you read on in that article, you will see that there was a possibility of several million dollars being spent on an Omaha project which will not be built...now \$4 million was the amount, that has been placed on hold to reconsider it and see if it was needed. They mentioned the basis for that as the declining veterans' population that has to be considered and served by it. Well, in the Omaha area the finding by the Department of Roads, MAPA and the Chamber of Commerce and anybody who has done traffic surveys is that the traffic is declining on local streets, it is declining on the Interstate, so if the purpose of a highway is to facilitate the movement of traffic and you have less traffic, there is no need established for this road to be built and none of those who support the road have ever been able to establish such a need. Now I want to tell those of you who may still be with me and those of you who may be not, but to those who will read this transcript to see what kind of material was placed before the Legislature, I am going to show you that the insistence on certain guarantees before a project is undertaken is not original with me...it is not original with me. In the Lincoln Star of March 5th, 1982 you find these words: "Senator J. James Exon said Thursday he would not vote for economic or military aid to El Salvador unless the President...unless President Reagan provides absolute assurance the United States will not involve troops in that country under any circumstances". Quote, "I am not going to vote for any type of economic or military aid to that country until I have positive and unequivocal assurance from the President that under no circumstances would we involve U.S. troops there", Exon said in a telephone news conference from Washington". Now if the Senator, the U.S. Senator, who has been sent to that most august of all

9893