

April 1, 1982

LB 761

people. Senator Landis passed out a sheet here showing salaries. If you earned \$10,000 in 1970 in Nebraska, today it could have been up to \$13,000. I don't know if any of you know what the starting salary is today, 1982, for a Grade I state employee. It is \$580 a month...\$580 a month. If you are a woman and you are one of those unfortunate ones that had a husband that deserted you and left you with a child to support and you are trying to stay off of welfare, try it on \$580 a month. These are mostly women's jobs. Office clerk, custodian, food service worker, elevator operator, laundry worker. That is today's salary Grade I, \$580 a month. Now, senators, I want to remind you, most of you probably don't grocery shop, but a gallon of milk is \$1.50 today. A loaf of bread is 97 cents. A box of cereal is \$1.20 or \$1.23. I don't know what kind of an apartment or house you could live in and still have money left over to pay the high utilities and feed a family on \$580 a month. So we are saying someone who is trying to make a living, someone who is trying to stay off of welfare, and that is what we keep hearing all the time is these people on welfare, \$580 a month I think if you had a wife or a husband and a couple of children, you would probably qualify for quite a few welfare programs. Maybe some state employees are getting welfare, I don't know. I know that if I had several children and I was only making \$580 a month, I would have to swallow my pride and go get food stamps before I would let my children starve. I think it is ironic that we started this session last year with a proposal for a 25 percent increase for the Governor who is only making \$40,000 a year. I don't think we can even humanely say that someone making \$580 a month today should not be given any kind of a raise and then in January we look at it and see, can we afford it? We still have LB 488 pending before us for the constitutional raises or constitutional officers' raises. I don't care whether they get a 3 percent or a 5 percent or what raise they get, they aren't going to starve on what they are getting. But \$580 a month to me is ridiculous. I can commend....

SENATOR CLARK: You have one minute left.

SENATOR HIGGINS: ...Senator Fenger for his attempt to try to cut the budget. I personally as a state senator would be more than happy to give up that beautiful expensive stationary I have with the imprint of the Capitol on it. I think there is a lot of printing done around here that we could eliminate, but, of course, that would hurt business, wouldn't it? It wouldn't really hurt the little people. It would hurt the people that profit from the state. So I just have to say that I hope that when