

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, I was one of those who expressed some concern about the project, originally, and I also was one of those who said that the university should not necessarily be made to eat the cost of the project. But I do think that perhaps Senator Withem and Hall have a reasonable amendment which we ought to discuss. I believe it is a mistake to just naively appropriate the funds necessary to repair the structure without some attempt to determine if, first of all, it is absolutely necessary and it has been indicated by those who should know that it is not necessary. I think we ought to, at the same time, reassure ourselves that the structure is safe. I do not know what extent of liability the university has if, in fact, the thing collapses on individuals. None of us want that to happen. But if, in fact, the load test is something which can be done and a good engineer said can be done, then we ought to take a look at it. More than anything else, I think is the fact that, obviously, this Legislature was kept in the dark about the condition of the structure. Notwithstanding the fact that the med school came to this Legislature twice in the last two years for major additions to the College of Medicine, not once, to my knowledge, was the deficiencies...were the deficiencies of the pharmacy college ever mentioned. Had they been mentioned, I am sure there would have been some additional discussion and debate relative to the major improvement at the medical school. Another item that was not mentioned was the fact that some of the same individuals involved engineeringwise with this structure are involved in the construction of the Cushing Memorial Stadium at Kearney. Kind of a sad commentary, I think, on judgment of individuals. If you have someone who performs unsatisfactorily in one instance, then do you go out and hire those same people without knowing for certain that they have improved their capability or their capacity? Most important of all is to assess what happened and why it happened and where the blame lies. Is there any single member of this body who believes that if that structure had been built for private industry that the private owner would have been stuck? Not on your life. Not in a minute. He would have been raising hell and putting a block under it about the second six-month period and he should have and we should have, and the people who were responsible ought to be held accountable. Now someone says, well, they're all gone. Ladies and gentlemen, you follow the chain of command. You follow the chain of command. It's that simple, and people ought to be held accountable. How do we know the same thing does not happen time after time after time