

May 4, 1989

LB 813

Mr. President, the next amendment I have is by Senator Hall. Senator, this is your substance...aid to substance abuse programs.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. President, and members, as the Clerk stated this is an amendment that would increase funding for the substance abuse program and DPI by 10 percent. It was an amendment that I offered to the Appropriations Committee at the time the hearing on DPI's budget dealt with the issue of the alcoholism programs. The substance abuse programs, as many of you know, have had a very tenuous existence with regard to their funding even though we have, in the last four years, raised the alcohol tax to, hopefully, provide additional funding for them and that was through LB 280, Senator Arlene Nelson's bill, that passed this body. The appropriation here, or the amendment as I offer it would be an increase of \$456,000 for these programs. The alcohol tax that has been raised is, for example, in 1988 was \$16.4 million; \$16.4 million was raised by the tax that we currently have on alcohol and the current budget in this program is just over \$4.5 million. There has been a very minimal increase in the budget in the last couple years. There was a substantial increase in 1986-87 budget year but there had been a very dry spell, excuse the pun, prior to that. But for the last couple of years there...immediately following that increase there was a reduction because we were cutting budgets and there was \$150,000 additional or 3.3 percent increase but that was limited to new and expanding programs so that that was not available for continuation of current or existing programming. What I offer here again is a 10 percent increase in these programs. The dollar figure is 456 and it would be a 10 percent increase in the current budget. I think that the programming in this area needs to have an increase. There has been little or no increase in this area. We have had some federal monies that have flown...flowed through these programs but those, again, have been earmarked or targeted as to where they can go. There clearly is not a problem with us understanding that there is a need out there. Just the other day I read in the paper where we are going to have the National Guard along with the State Patrol do increased fly-overs to spot marijuana fields for eradication purposes. I think that that is a good proposal, I guess, if that's the way to cut down on the cultivation of the marijuana crop in the State of Nebraska. But to go hand-in-hand with that, I would think an increase in the substance abuse programs that help folks on the other end of that spectrum who currently