

pure raw extortion.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I agree with Senator Beutler. Many of the things that have been said have already...need to be said have already been said, but there are a couple things that I guess I would like to add. I don't view this as a Lincoln versus Omaha or rural versus urban issue. I think it's a case of economics. Question is, can a state of a million and a half people support two colleges? I think not. I think it's been demonstrated when we look at the work that the Appropriations Committee has done, they've demonstrated that there is just not that much money around to do and we have to be somewhat frugal in how we expend that money. I guess I just have one question for Senator Hall, if he'd respond. Senator Hall, you know, you talk about the importance of the Engineering College to the City of Omaha and I certainly would not argue with you about that issue, but I, after I read the letter that came from the...I guess approximately...endorsed by approximately 100 Omaha professional people, I just got to wondering, as I understand it the city...people of the City of Omaha offered to, by a vote of the people, to give the university or to turn the university over to the taxpayers of the State of Nebraska because they felt like that it was a burden on their back and they didn't apparently want to continue to support it. I just wondered if you think it would be a good idea if we didn't put up an amendment or put up a constitutional...what do you call it...anyway to get a vote of the people to see if they want to give it back to Omaha. Maybe the citizens of Omaha would like to have the university back and we could help establish the university back there as the University of Omaha and then we wouldn't have to worry about whether they had an engineering college. I say this in jest because I know that you don't agree with that, but I just wondered what your feelings about the fact that it was once the University of Omaha and became the University of Nebraska at Omaha and now there's a big debate over whether there are more programs needed in Omaha or they're needed in Lincoln. I sometimes think that the distance between Omaha and Lincoln is not that great that these things can't be worked out. I just wondered what your attitude or feeling was in that regard.

SENATOR HALL: Mr. President and members, Senator Vrtiska, the decision was made not by the City of Omaha, but basically by the