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FLOOR DEBATE

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homeowners or businesses, farmers, ranchers, et cetera, of \$1; 45 cents would go to the cities, 45 cents would go to the counties, with the 5 cents that they had (inaudible), and \$1 for schools. And so we're kind of going back on our word and I...and that, to me, is simply...troubles me because we did make cuts in both our income and sales tax back in '97. We haven't really readdressed those, those ideas. So that's one thing that I would maybe like to look...have the body look at, and with that, I'd give the rest of my time back to the Chair.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Hartnett. Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. On the way down here this morning, I stopped to visit with a friend, an old friend, and he was very concerned about the headlines in the newspaper where it said this morning: New state budget not easy task; lawmakers who begin the budget debate are looking at tax increases and spending cuts for the next two-year cycle. Increases, and he said, you know, I'm three years from retirement, Dwite, and the wife and I have to start looking for residence out of state because we can't afford to keep our home and retire here. That has to do with these increases. But it brings me to my area of study and concern, and by no means am I getting up here and trying to put down anything that the Appropriations Committee has done. They are working fools. They are working morning, noon, and night, and I can't do that kind of job. And I thank them for the work they've done. But you might remember last session, the big news thing was that we closed the prison. And we did something bold. And by no means is this going to be sour grapes, but in this budget that prison is reopened. And I'm not saying it should stay closed, but it does bring to the fact that we have really not cut that area of government in any way, shape, or form. In fact, it's now back as a deficit, which Senator Wehrbein said it would be last year. The Judiciary Committee, that I serve on, has recommended to keep it open because the Department of Corrections came in and said there was no way they could close it. The Department of Corrections did also not come back and tell us any way they could close it. They didn't give us any ideas. We didn't...they didn't get pushed the slightest little