

## Legislature squabbles over budget cut motions

By Leslie Kendrick

The Nebraska Legislature Wednesday defeated two amendments to Gov. Charles Thone's proposed budget cuts and adopted amendments concerning aid to dependent children, deferment of cigarette tax revenues and Commission on Aging funds.

Thone has called for the special session to cut the state's budget by \$25 million. Existing state tax rates will leave the state short by that amount.

Defeated was Waverly Sen. Jerome Warner's amendment which proposed a 1 percent increase in state income tax and a \$6 million cut in the state budget.

Sen. Rex Haberman of Imperial said he opposed an increase in state income tax at a time when there were 1,000 people in Omaha lining up for 200 jobs. Haberman said the Legislature ought to study other states' methods of increasing state revenue without adopting an increase or not," DeCamp said.

DeCamp said the amendment would be interpreted

by the media as simply a tax increase, and the Legislature should approve Thone's budget proposal intact.

The Warner amendment is a compromise, said Sen. Elroy Hefner of Coleridge.

"If we don't realize this is a compromise we may need 2 to 5 percent in taxes next year," Hefner said.

Warner compared the adoption of Thone's budget proposal to the U.S. Senate's approval of the sale of AWACs to Saudi Arabia.

"What ever happened to your own judgment? If you believe it's wrong then vote that way," Warner said.

An amendment proposed by Lincoln Sen. Chris Beutler, Dave Landis and Don Wesley also was defeated. The amendment proposed a 1 percent cut in state support of local governments and a 1 percent cut for state agencies.

Many of Nebraska's local governments are able to get by with a 1 percent reduction in state aid, Wesley said. The amendment says the state will hold taxes down without singling out state agencies for reductions, he said.

Landis said the effect on local governments would be negligible and would equal less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the city's total budget.

Omaha Sen. Carol Pirsch likened the state's relationship to local governments as a parent-child relationship. Pirsch said local governments should not have to sacrifice for the parents.

Landis said he objected to the attitude that the state shouldn't break promises made to the local governments.

"We can break our promises to the university students, we can break our promises to the mentally retarded, but God forbid we should break our promises to the cities," Landis said.

Warner's amendment concerning the budget of the State Commission on Aging passed. Warner said the amendment will force the commission to accept the cuts proposed by Thone but require the commission to take all cuts in their operational costs. This will guarantee that aid given by the commission will not be reduced.

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## Priest says Guatemalan rebels 'not communists'

By Mary Louise Knapp

A self-imposed obligation to inform Americans of mounting terrorism and poverty in Guatemala has prompted The Rev. Fernando Lopez, a Guatemalan Catholic priest, to speak on the issue in the United States.

Lopez, who said he left Guatemala in July of 1980 because of repeated threats on his life by the country's army, visited Lincoln Wednesday to address a Free University course on Guatemala. He spoke Wednesday evening in the Nebraska Union.

Lopez' visit and travel expenses were paid by Nebraskans for Peace.

"I don't like to remember it (the problems in Guatemala) but I have to do it," Lopez said in a Wednesday interview. "Americans don't have the information that they need about the situation."

Lopez had been working with Indian peasants in the Quiche province of Guatemala to help them establish agricultural cooperatives and better living conditions when the political climate forced him to flee, he said.

Two of his fellow priests in the province had already been killed when he left, he said.

The bishop of the archdiocese of the Quiche province and church workers in the area decided to close down all

church activity and leave the area.

Lopez said church workers are being persecuted because of their efforts to improve the lives of the Guatemalan peasants, most of whom live on two-and-a-half acres of land. In order to supplement their income, the peasants must work on coffee or cotton plantations in the tropic lowlands of the country for a salary of about \$2.50 for 14 hours of work, he said.

The illiteracy rate in Guatemala's country of 7.5 million people, is 72 percent. Less government funds are going toward education every year, Lopez said.

"The government is encouraging illiteracy by killing university professors and students," Lopez said.

### Students endangered

"To be a student in Guatemala is dangerous, and to be a professor is even more so," he said.

More than 100 university professors have been killed by the army's death squads in the past few years and population of Guatemala universities has fallen from 30,000 to 7,000, he said.

Health problems are rampant among the population, with an average of one doctor for every 8,000 people. In the Quiche province where Lopez worked, three doctors serve a population of 350,000, he said.

Lopez said the Guatemalan "death squads," soldiers of the Guatemalan army and police officers, are directly responsible for Guatemalan president Romeo Lucas Garcia.

"He (Garcia) is responsible for the genocide of the Guatemalan people," Lopez said. "He is defending his own wealth."

Lopez said that 72 percent of the land in Guatemala is owned by wealthy bureaucrats and military officers, with the majority of this land owned by Garcia himself.

The landowners do not want the peasants to improve their standard of living because they want to protect their own interests, he said.

Lopez said that Garcia's conservative government has long been assisted by the United States, and that support from the Reagan administration is likely to increase because of the administration's hard line on "communist" governments.

### Capitalism won't work

The Guatemalan resistance groups believe the capitalism will not work in the Guatemalan government, but they are not advocating communism, Lopez said.

"They call us communists, but I've never even known a communist," Lopez said.

He said that there are international rumors that the Guatemalan resistance organizations are getting financial help from Cuba and the Soviet Union, but that he had never seen any representatives from either country in Guatemala.

"I've seen many Americans, though, and I know they have military advisers in Guatemala," he said.

"Seventy-two percent of the people are illiterate," Lopez added. "They don't even know who Karl Marx is. They're not communists. What they're fighting for is their own lives."

In 1975, the Guatemalan army appropriated land which was being used for agricultural cooperatives for Indian peasants because oil had been found on it, Lopez said.

"We (the church workers and Indian families) had a legal title to the land, but then the army came up with a title from 1928 or 1929 that said they owned the land," Lopez said.

## DeCamp favors energy independence

By Melinda Norris

Nebraska will be facing a depression in the near future if citizens don't work toward energy independence, predicted state Sen. John DeCamp at the ASUN Senate meeting Wednesday.

With the deregulation of natural gas, dramatic increases in prices are expected, DeCamp said. These increases combined with the state's dependency on natural gas will cause energy costs to play a major role in the state's budget and the personal income of citizens.

Nebraska imports 95 percent of its raw energy sources and "lives and dies on natural gas," DeCamp said.

DeCamp compared the expected rise in natural gas prices to oil prices after deregulation took effect in 1973.

In 1973, gas was 29.9 cents a gallon and that price didn't hurt that much because personal and corporate income was going up at the same rate, DeCamp said.

However, in 1978 energy costs were beginning to move ahead of income, he said.

In 1970, one out of every \$5 in the state was spent for energy, DeCamp said. By 1980, the cost for energy moved up only a few percentage points, but the absolute amount tripled from \$1 billion to \$3 billion.

In 1985, with the deregulation of natural gas, the cost for gas may increase by 35 percent, considering an approximate annual increase of 16 percent, DeCamp said.

However, DeCamp explained that in different communities, annual increases could start at 35 percent, 40 percent or 60 percent.

"If we keep going the way we are," DeCamp said, "one out of every \$3 of income will be going strictly for energy."

DeCamp explained that as citizens start allotting more of their income to pay fuel bills, they will spend less money in other areas. This shift will bring a drop in retail sales, he said.

Northeastern states experienced a depression between 1973 and 1980, during the deregulation of oil, because of their 95 percent dependency, DeCamp said.

"Because of the deregulation of natural gas, it will happen to Nebraska," DeCamp said.

DeCamp suggested Nebraska should "unhook" its dependency on imported fuel through efficiency and develop its own resources.

"We need task forces in communities to get the work going," DeCamp said. "We need to develop groups for next year to whop the senators on the side of the head with a two-by-four to get major energy legislation passed."

DeCamp said Nebraska has an unlimited solar potential, but that the small solar companies in Nebraska are "undercapitalized" and that the state legislature has provided "not much to make them go, and everything to discourage them."

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