

horses from the Indians and sold them to the settlers at lower prices. Anyway, just an aside, I guess, but I wanted to make clear some misstatements of fact that have been made on the floor. Please understand that under current law, if you steal something of a value over \$300, it's already a felony. It is already a felony, so we are talking about making the theft of an item that is worth less than \$300 a felony. Now, if you steal something now and the value is between 300 and 100 dollars, it is a misdemeanor, but please keep in mind that it is a Class I misdemeanor. It is serious offense already. A Class I misdemeanor, you can be thrown in jail for a year and fined \$1,000 or both. So it is no minor thing. Now it may be that county attorneys from place to place do or do not want to prosecute, that is always a problem, but it is a problem with regard to any particular item that you are talking about. I don't think it is a problem that is related to cattle or calves. So keep in mind that there is a serious penalty. I wish you would also keep in mind that, in fact, over the last 15 years, since the criminal code was enacted, the penalty for theft has, in fact, been getting more serious and more serious and more serious. Why? Because those dollar caps that we put back in in the mid-1970s we haven't changed. That \$300 cap that we put in in 1976, if you change that, if you took into account inflation and change that to the same value, the same 1976 value, you'd have to get over 6 or 7 or 8 hundred dollars before you got to the felony provisions. So by doing nothing with these statutes, this is a problem we have been through in a couple of other places where dollar caps are put into the statutes, by doing nothing for 15 years with regard to these dollar caps, we have, in fact, been doing something. We have been making theft penalty more and more serious. So if it is any help to you, you should keep in mind that theft penalties are becoming more serious, whether they are cattle or any other particular product or item. But, once again, I hope you will consider this amendment very seriously because it would be the first departure of this type from our statutes, and I can assure you it would open the floodgates. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I hope that some attention was paid to what Senator Beutler had indicated. Earlier Senator Pirsch did make a very good point, also, when she mentioned the singling out of certain types of property for certain types of treatment. If we consider two