

SPEAKER BAACK: We will now proceed. We are on Final Reading of LR 1, is that correct? And we have a motion to return, is that where we are?

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, we were considering a motion from Senator Wickersham to return LR 1 to Select File for specific amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Wickersham, would you like to just briefly describe your amendment?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, colleagues, this is the amendment that we were just beginning to discuss before lunch. It is simply a one-liner, if you will, as a constitutional amendment. It simply adds a fourth category of property to be exempt from ad valorem taxation. And I guess now that I have a second opportunity to speak to that question, I ought to be a little bit more careful and emphasize that it is an exemption from ad valorem taxation only. As you begin to think about this, you will realize that, for example, animals are subject to...already subject to other kinds of fee schedules or what you might characterize as taxes, such as permits, checkoffs, and so forth. At any rate, the amendment is intended to, as a constitutional matter, exempt inventories and animals from ad valorem taxation. And, again, I will say that the intention is to describe or to use the word "inventories" in a very broad sense, to include not only inventories for resale but, for example, production inventories which are arguably something else. Likewise, the word "animals" is intended to have a very broad definition to include, for example, breeding livestock, if they aren't to be considered inventory. It is also intended to cover such things as pedigreed dogs, other animals that you might not think of as being otherwise subject to tax. But if we do not grant an exemption of this nature, you will find all kinds of animals, if you will, that are, indeed, subject to tax. My reason for bringing the amendment primarily is that I believe it is a result that we would reach if we come back in January of next year and begin to consider what exemptions we wish to make as a statutory matter. I think that either or both of these categories would garner the 30 votes, which may be required if we pass LR 1. I see no reason not to bring that to the people directly and make clear that if we are given the authority, these are the exemptions that we would grant. It seems to me that by putting them in the Constitution we do give ourselves comfort that, indeed, these exemptions are