

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. And, members of the Legislature, you heard Senator Wesely read from the Attorney General's opinion whereby farmland can be declared blighted and substandard, so if a large packing plant would decide that it wants to come into Nebraska or expand, it could get a small city nearby to declare farmland to be blighted and substandard and expand its operation. I don't know whether it could run a feedlot. I don't know what all a packing plant could include among its operations to qualify under this bill, but they could bring in workers from other parts of the country. They could pay them minimum wage. We are unwilling to say that there is any standard that has to be met, and in addition to that, it gives me grave concern, and I have to say this for Senator Hillman's benefit, about that attempt to repeal Initiative 300. If you take away that one protection that noncorporate farms have, LB 830 and LB 829, once that shield is taken away, may make it possible to run family farms out of the state even sooner. And I tie that...I am not going to go into a long discussion of that because we will have a chance to debate that at a later time, but Senator Lindsay has a bill that's to make it a crime or at least against the law, I don't know if it will be a civil or criminal matter, for large operations to engage in predatory pricing. So on the one hand, you pass bills to bring great big businesses into the state; then on the other hand, you say if big businesses operate the way big businesses operate, then they are going to be committing a crime. There are two messages given here but bills are brought to us based on who asks the individual senator to bring it. There is never a comprehensive view of what it is we, as a Legislature, to do. So I do not see consistency between Senator Lindsay's bill to outlaw what he calls predatory pricing, the attempt to remove the protections of Initiative 300, and then the passage of LB 830 and 829. Here is what one of these people said who supports Senator Lindsay's bill. Below cost pricing sounds good to the consumer until the competition is gone, Stone said; then the only company that is left controls the pricing and the market, and that may not be good for the consumer in terms of pricing and choice. Apply that to Initiative 300. If large corporations can come in, and we know that farming is becoming more and more tenuous as a commercial venture, it will hasten the demise of the family farm. It will concentrate more and more of agricultural operations into fewer and fewer hands, and, initially, that may sound good to the consumer where they might be able to do things that will squeeze the family operations out. But when they begin to gain control,...