

Last year, 1978 through November, there were 9225 cases filed which would indicate that that has doubled over a period of six years and that is in light of the fact that inflation has eroded the \$500 jurisdictional figure in fact over the last six years. And just to give you more specific information, Senator Hefner's point with regard to inflation was valid, and to make it more specific, if you were just increasing the jurisdictional amount to take care of inflation from 1973 through 1978, then you would increase it to \$806. So what is happening in effect with the original committee amendment is that they are saying small claims court is a bad deal and it should be cut down. I submit to you that this is against all the evidence. All the judges here in Lancaster County think the small claims court is working well. Lawyers think that small claims court is working well. I was frankly surprised in the committee hearing to hear that Senator Chambers did not think it was working well. I would like to point out also that when Judge Ryan did come to testify at the Judicial Committee hearing that he had noted that over 2000 cases had been filed in Omaha in small claims court, and of that number, only eight or nine, he said, had been appealed and I think the big point to be made there is that small claims court is working. It is getting things settled without getting lawyers involved and keeping small claims out of the district court where the court is already overburdened. I think it is a bill that helps everybody and I think it should be passed.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I would like to ask Senator Beutler a question.

PRESIDENT: Senator Beutler, would you respond?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Beutler, who asked that this bill be introduced?

SENATOR BEUTLER: My aunt, for one, and several people in the district also indicated to me that they thought small claims court was a good deal. My aunt doesn't run any business. She is just a lady who was in a car accident and felt like she needed a means of getting that settled without hiring lawyers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: So your introduction of the bill is not