

of inflation causing larger claims to be presented or having to be presented or compromised downwards so that they can come before the court. I think you have not listened to what was told to you by Senator Stoney and others and you can check the transcript of the hearing if you feel that the reporting of it is inaccurate, that the average award is less than \$300. So if the average is less than \$300 in the largest city in the state, that leaves a \$200 cushion in the present amount. So rather than raise the present amount by 50%, you want to double it which is your prerogative and apparently you intend to do it, but as I have said on other matters on this floor, I want it to be clear why I do the things that I do and take the positions that I take. In this instance I say again, I believe the judge's experiences as one who sat in the small claims court has more validity and gives us more direction as to how we should act than the request of one dissatisfied person. And Senator Beutler did not understand what I said during the hearing if he thought I said the court was not working. I said I don't want it to work in an improper fashion. Because of the request that he got and which caused him to introduce this bill, it would seem that he is saying the court is not working, therefore, it needs to be altered radically and it is a radical alteration in a court when you double the jurisdictional amount. I don't know how many more cases this will make possible to be brought to court, but let me tell you what I meant again about companies threatening people. You can only use the court so many times for collection purposes but the threat is what these companies utilize and they are pastmasters in threatening citizens. I am sure Senator Johnson from his work with the legal aid is aware of this. I am sure that all of you with the number of years you have been in the world are aware that the threat of an impending disaster is often worse than the disaster itself. The anxiety, the fear and the uncertainty which are produced by a threat from a loan company to take you to court is all but overwhelming to some people. You can be told that you will lose your job, you will lose your home and everything else. You will be ruined in the community and these things do happen. So it seems to me that what Senator Beutler is saying is that since people can use the district court for this purpose and any other court, you ought to expand the number of people who can be placed under these types of threats by increasing the amount, the jurisdictional amount, of the small claims court. This one last point I want you to be sure and remember. The only reason this bill is before us is because Senator Beutler's aunt was not able to recover in small claims court a claim that she had.