

problem that I have is that in a time when the taxpayers back home are telling me to hold down the cost of government I think we are perhaps putting the minimums, in my estimation at least and in the taxpayers' back home estimation, a little bit too high. I thoroughly understand the problem that the county sheriffs are having. As Senator Landis indicated, we, of all people, should be able to understand the low salaries by elected officials and their attempts to live in a world where the costs are continually spiraling upward. However, I think that by lowering those minimums \$3,000 a piece we are still giving the majority, well, all of the county sheriffs a substantial raise. I think it is a fiscally sound amendment, and in order to continue to support this bill all the way across, quite frankly I am going to have to have it. I would urge the body's serious consideration of this amendment.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Lewis, do you wish to speak to the Vickers amendment?

SENATOR LEWIS: Yes, sir. Mr. President, I think in terms, first of all, let me make it very clear, I oppose the Vickers amendment and let me make it very clear as to why. The concept that is being advanced now is not a new item on this floor in terms of sheriff salary and the conversion of food money to help pay that salary. I think it was five years ago, Senator Chambers, that Pat Thomas, the sheriff in my county, said to me, Frank, he said, I wish those guys would pay me my salary and not let anybody accuse me of making hordes of money on food for prisoners, and I came before a committee and I went before our county board and I proposed at that time that they raise that salary to an adequate level and not subject the sheriffs in my judgment to unnecessary and unsubstantiated criticism of getting money out of food for prisoners to such a degree that they could live on the ridiculous level set now. That issue hasn't been addressed and those salaries haven't been addressed for a number of years and, Senator Vickers, if we were attempting to raise them to \$45,000 a piece, there could be some validity to it, but if you are talking about \$15,000, that is the average family income in Nebraska and I don't think Nebraskans are going to be mad about paying the chief law enforcement official in their county the average salary that everybody else in the county makes. I think it is important that the public understands two things. First of all, they understand that we are talking about salaries for '83. We cannot raise or lower those salaries during the term of those people's office. So we