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Years ago, in Carven Superior Court, a case tried by Judge Leo Carr of Burlington provided a striking and ridiculous example of just how inadequate some of our State Laws can be.

Under the circumstances, Judge Carr had no choice other than that of declaring a non-suit favoring a defendant charged with stealing a dog. The question of whether the dog was actually taken by the defendant did not enter into the decision.

The accused allegedly snatched the canine in question, and transported him to another section of the State, and there appeared to be abundant evidence to substantiate the charge. In fact, the Burlington jurist denied a request for non-suit on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

At this point, the defendant's attorney played his trump card. He introduced evidence that showed the owner of the dog had not paid either the ad valorem tax or the usual dog tax on his pooch.

Then the attorney produced a State statute that said a dog was not considered personal property unless a tax had been paid on him, and if a dog wasn't personal property, then stealing him was not larceny under the law.

Since the defendant was charged with larceny, and since, according to the state of North Carolina, larceny had not occurred, the alleged dog stealer walked out of court a free man. The owner of the dog was understandably furious and bewildered.

The prosecution got nowhere when it offered evidence that the dog was less than six months old when purchased, and hence not taxable. The dog, it was shown, was listed for taxes at the next listing, but this tax had not become due, and of course hadn't been paid, at the time the canine was allegedly stolen.

The statue was clear, and left Judge Carr no alternative. Hence, it had been established here in New Bern, in a court of law, that citizens who owned dogs on which taxes had not been paid did not, in effect, own these dogs.

The law said that they could be seized, right in front of your eyes, and that you were powerless to prosecute the party who did the stealing. This, believe it or not, was the reasoning of a statute passed by the North Carolina legislature in Raleigh.

This editor had occasion to cover the trial. We were neither a judge, attorney nor legislator, but such a law didn't make sense to us. Because it didn't make sense, we gave the case wide publicity in the press, and made caustic comment about it on a nightly radio program we were doing at the time.

Until something was done about the matter, we suggested, our advice to North Carolinians with dogs too young to be taxed was to wean them early, and teach them to bite strangers who came around with robbery in mind. Or, we speculated, biting a hunk out of a legislator's leg might speed the cause of justice.

Whether the stories we wrote had any affect on what happened after that or not, the statute was subsequently amended. Today you'll find, under Section 14-84 of the General Statutes of

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SHE REMEMBERED—Our affection for Beth Lansche began the first time she smiled at us, from her baby carriage. Bless her heart, she continued to have additional smiles for this highly flattered editor through the years. She was our original Mirror Maid, and other pictures of her have appeared in The Mirror since then. Always Beth expressed appreciation for even the smallest recognition. So it was hardly accidental when we were tipped off, days in advance, that news of her engagement and pending marriage would be released last Wednesday to national press services. Our ex-

clusive story, for the Raleigh News and Observer — the story behind the story — was already set in type, ready to go, when the news went out on the wires from Houston. To the regret of the Lansches, we had to scoop our own little weekly to score the news beat. Once again, however, we do have the opportunity to feature photos of Beth on our front and back pages. Congratulations to Capt. C. C. Williams, her astronaut husband-to-be, and every wish for happiness to the girl who becomes his bride next Wednesday at St. Paul's Catholic Church.