The united automobile workers put out a publication entitled *The Guardian.* In that publication they have figures showing the estimated cost of modest living for a year for a city family as at January 31, 1954. They have statistics for a working man who is a tenant, who has a car, who is a home owner, or who is a home purchaser. They estimate that the highest cost for a modest living is $4,600 for a home purchaser with a car, and the lowest modest living cost is for a home owner, someone who owns his home and has no car. In that case the estimate is $3,628.

In other words, according to this publication the average family needs at least $300 a month for a modest living and to balance the budget. Yet according to the taxation statistics three-quarters of the income earners in this country obtain less than $300 a month.

For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I feel that family allowances are essential, that an increase should be made at this time, and that the very least the government should do is to restore the purchasing power of the family allowance cheque so that it may be of greater assistance to the vast majority of families who now find it almost impossible to balance the family budget.

Mr. Elmore Philpott (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, before I speak on this particular item I think I should perhaps apologize for having started to speak on it a week ago last Friday. My only excuse is that I was listening to the page boys who were bringing us the Olympic hockey game scores, and I was not paying attention to the clerk when he read the item in the name of the hon. member for Assiniboia. So I started to speak on the wrong subject.

I am also a bit sorry that I did not speak last Friday as I should have, because I think I could have given a wide measure of moral support to the measure introduced by the hon. member at that time. I am afraid, however, that I can give him no moral support with respect to the resolution we are discussing tonight.

I think if hon. members had it within their power to say whether or not they would grant an increase in family allowances, old age assistance, old age security or any other welfare measure that we have in this country, not a single member of any of the four parties would hesitate if we were able to do that. But I submit, Mr. Speaker, that it is quite irresponsible to suggest that regardless of the taxation we levy, regardless of the necessity to balance the budget, we can increase our welfare allowances from year to year just out of good intentions.

I say to the hon. member, without any intention of being out of order, that it is not so many days ago that we heard a warning in this chamber about the terrible things that would happen if the price of beef should go down or if the floor price under butter were removed. I submit that all of these things have a connection with the increase in the cost of living and therefore with the justification for or argument in favour of higher family allowances.

In this country we are about to embark on the most comprehensive step that has ever been taken in the history of our nation in the form of the great national-provincial, coast to coast health care scheme.

An hon. Member: Hospital care.

Mr. Philpott: Hospital care scheme. The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has clearly laid down the terms on which the government is willing to proceed with the plan, and we all know that it is going to cost the treasury of the federal government real money. By coincidence it is going to cost the treasury almost exactly the same amount in millions of dollars as the amount by which the hon. member for Assiniboia suggests that family allowances should be increased to bring them up to the level of the increase in the cost of living since 1947.

Maybe I am wrong, but I have the impression that if all the citizens of Canada could have their choice between an increase in the family allowance to bring it up to an amount that would compensate for the increase in the cost of living since 1947 or a plan whereby the national government in co-operation with the provinces will go ahead with a national health insurance scheme they would, in my opinion, vote by an overwhelming majority, probably by 99 per cent, to go ahead with the national health insurance scheme.

I had the great privilege this summer of travelling quite extensively in several of the countries which are most often held up in the house as being the ideal welfare state countries in all the world, namely the Scandinavian countries such as Denmark, Sweden, Norway and so on. I spent some time in each of those countries, and on some other occasion this session I hope to have the privilege of saying something about civil defence in that wonderful country, Sweden, where I had the privilege of examining their system.

However, tonight I want to talk for a minute or two about how the welfare state schemes in these countries compare with our own. These countries are often portrayed by the hon. gentlemen immediately opposite me as being the most advanced in all the world in this regard. Not one of these countries has a family allowance scheme that compares in any way with what we have right here in our own