

sorts, whether formal or informal, that you try to meet every month. You structure your budget according to your wage and how much money you are going to bring in. You don't anticipate being hurt on the job, but then when you are hurt on the job, then all of a sudden, you are in desperate straits. How do you make the payments on the house? How do you make the payments on your car? How do you keep buying clothes for your children and keeping your health insurance up, and all those kind of things, paying your doctor and medical bills for your wife and children and family? We have one of the lowest weekly benefits in the entire country. I don't think that it is fair. I think we should be embarrassed by the low amount we provide in workers' comp benefits to the citizens of our state. I would ask you, what if you were a working person on the job and you were injured? Could you live on \$245 a week, or \$255 a week as it has been proposed in this particular legislation. If you are trying to support a family and support your wife and children or your husband and children, you have got some people that are dependent upon you, you have got payments and bills to meet, how can you possibly survive on that amount? What I am proposing in this amendment is a reasonable increase, at least at this time, and I hope it increases even beyond that in years past. It should be an embarrassment to our state that Iowa, for example, pays \$684 a month. A person is injured in Omaha, cannot work any longer, is injured, has to take time off, his maximum benefit, \$245. If he is injured and he works across the river in Council Bluffs, he is injured, cannot work, he can get a maximum benefit of \$684 per month. That is a tremendous contrast just between those two, our neighboring states, and that applies to all the others, too. While certainly the others are not as high as Colorado...or as Iowa in their benefits, take a look at Colorado and Wyoming and South Dakota and Missouri and Kansas, they are all above what we pay. What I am suggesting in this amendment to the committee amendments is that we at least come into a level where we are equal with Kansas, and not at the bottom of that whole area. Those states in our Midwest set a pattern that I think that we can compare for our purposes in what we should pay, as what we should permit as maximum workers' compensation benefits. I think they are fair. I think they are reasonable, and that they are appropriate. With respect to any agreement within the committee, I haven't talked with the people, with the AFL-CIO people about this amendment. I haven't talked with any working people. It is my own idea. I think it is so unfair, the committee amendment that came out of there, that I think something should be done about it. I think this is