Mr. STEPHENS. I would like to say something that has worried me for a long time.

Why is it that in America that a man buys a commodity for $75, and he sells it for $150 on the market—that is a hundred percent markup—and we do not say anything much about it. But then we buy a commodity called money, and add 6 percent to it or 7 percent to it, we get real excited. It is a commodity just like the other. You are switching dollars for the other commodity.I never have understood why we make the differentiation. Money nowadays is as much a commodity as a television set. And we get real excited talking about 18 percent interest and actually the markup which is comparable is a hundred percent when the merchant converts the money into something else besides dollars.

Mr. ROBERTSON. Money in many respects is a commodity. We do, however, on the basis of history, at least, find that people have to have money in order to live, and so we put ceiling rates on it in the form of usury rates. And this is a matter that has grown up over the years.

Mr. STEPHENS. Food is also a necessary commodity. We can mark food up a hundred percent, and we cannot mark the money to buy the food up with but 7 percent.

Mr. ROBERTSON. I cannot give you an answer that is better than the question itself.

Mr. STEPHENS. I did not mean for you to try to answer. It was just an observation; thank you.

Mrs. SULLIVAN. Mr. Halpern.

Mr. HALPERN. Yes, Madam Chairman.

Governor, with regard to revolving credit disclosure, when I suggested a statement of the 18 percent as a maximum, I did not mean this to be a statutory limit, or ceiling, as I believe you interpreted my point. I was trying to address myself to the question of how to accurately state revolving credit charges on an annual basis.

Now, considering the complaint of the revolving credit people that often the charges for their credit do not amount to 18 percent, could we permit them to state that they will be charging 1½ percent a month, which at a maximum, that is 1 year after finance charges are levied, will amount to a charge of 18 percent per annum?

Mr. ROBERTSON. They should be able to state whatever they are doing, so long as it is true, provided, in my view, you have some standardized rate which would be an annual percentage rate, which could be used by the consumer as a basis for comparing his costs. Whether, in addition, he says this is at the rate of 1½ per a month, this does not bother me at all—I do not care what he says, if it is true—provided you do adopt some standardized ruler by which to measure the cost.

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you.

That is all.

Mr. BINGHAM. Madam Chairman, I do not have additional questions, but in my questions earlier I referred to a statement and to an article in the Wall Street Journal. I wonder if I could ask unanimous consent that they be included in the record at this point. One is a statement made to the Senate Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee regarding credit life and health insurance by James Hunt, Commissioner of Banking and Insurance for the State of Vermont, and the