All I can say is that the experience of the last year, and maybe this year, is going to be a lot different, but last year, from May on, my concern was simply that in the exercise of its sense of priorities, the Congress didn't add a very, very great deal to the overall totals.

Representative BROCK. I share your concern, even though we have a somewhat different Congress. What I am trying to say is that we can't consider these problems as individual problems. They are all interrelated.

And when you talk about the chart which you showed Senator Miller, where our price increases on a percentage basis were less than the price increases in Italy, Germany, and so forth, the fact remains that our business people are not competing on percentages. They are competing on dollars. They have got to charge a price which rewards them for the making of that product, and when we go up, if our base is higher, when we go up 2 percent, it means a higher price in terms of real dollars than the increase on a broader percentage base than of a smaller base.

Secretary FOWLER. I have compared many briefs dealing with that particular point in tariff proceedings. I realize fully what you are talking about.

Representative BROCK. I am very much aware of your concern. The concern that I have then is this. We last year, if I recall correctly, experienced a decline in our favorable trade balance of about $2 billion. Is that pretty close, $1.5 billion, somewhere in that area? Now, unless we can assure that prices are not going to run through the roof from underneath, the cost-push, or whatever the situation involved, we are faced with a situation where we may even be worsening our ballance of payments and in this case Mr. Roosa may be understanding the case and we may have a real crisis with the dollar.

Secretary FOWLER. I am concerned with that problem, too, about our competiveness, and I would agree with you that losing ground, losing our competitive position pricewise, in the export markets and in our own internal markets, opening up to increasing import competition on a price basis, would present a most serious problem.

We have been focusing on this ever since the balance-of-payments problem became a matter of serious national concern. I think what I would want to say on that subject now is that for the first 5 years, from 1960 to 1965, I think we increased our competitive advantage, because in terms of relative price levels, however you measure them, our position was better each year because many competing countries were undergoing much more substantial changes in costs and prices. Since the Vietnamese conflict has emerged, these gains have not continued, but we appear to be holding our ground.

The Subcommittee on Economic Statistics of this committee brought out in its report the fact that we don't have adequate statistics, and for budgetary reasons we haven't been able to get them. Within the executive branch, Treasury has been pressing other departments that are concerned with statistical operations, to improve our statistical measurements, and what we collect, so that we can get a better fix on this.

I can't really say more to you on the subject, except I share your deep concern on that, and my best judgment is that right now we are just probably holding our own. We should be increasing our competitiveness, and I would welcome it.