

Secretary WIRTZ. I am talking about the difficulty. It was easy for somebody to translate a single point affecting wages into a single percentage point, and by "somebody" I mean the American public, and to translate a principle into a decimal point—it was never done on the price side, not because of any lack of attempt, but because that message for interesting reasons just didn't get across and there is a lopsided reaction because the one was reduced to a decimal point and the other was not.

My first point is in answer to your question, unless that problem can be solved I think it would be a mistake to do it again.

My second point is, in the guideposts, 3.2 percent was intended to reflect the productivity element. It was interpreted as reflecting all elements. It was intended at least until 1966 to be a statement of general application to the economy as a whole. It was applied and interpreted in 1966 and the administration would share the responsibility for this as a result, for particular cases. I don't suppose we will ever get out of that habit. I don't think you could arrive at a single figure, given today's circumstances, which would represent a rational application of the productivity principle and the other relevant factors, and if you could, Mr. Reuss, and respectively I would point out that I think there is a built-in reaction in this country against being told that matters of the nature that we are talking about here should be reduced to a specific decimal point figure.

This country doesn't like being told "not to put beans up its nose" and that psychology was at work last year and it was 3.2 and this is the second time this country has learned that a specific figure—and, coincidentally, 3.2 is a poor translation of a broad set of principles in a particular point and so I don't think that another translation into a specific formula is recommended by present circumstances.

Representative REUSS. I would suggest to you that this country has not minded being told for a good long time that someone who reaches his 21st birthday is thus an adult and subject to all the legal consequences of being an adult.

Secretary WIRTZ. But the kids reject it.

Representative REUSS. And the day before he was not an adult, and I have not heard great outcries in this country for changing that rule and instead substituting one which says a person shall be an adult, and so considered for legal purposes, when he becomes rationally mature, because such a rule would be very difficult to apply.

Secretary WIRTZ. Your children are more mature than mine.

Representative REUSS. It would be difficult for society to decide whether somebody was an adult or not. My big difficulty with having vague guideposts is that nobody can tell whether he is being a "good guy" or a "bad guy."

Secretary WIRTZ. I don't believe it is that simple any more than I could translate moderation into 3.2 in the 1930's. I don't think you can translate this situation into a decimal point figure. I have a good deal of sympathy with a member of my family who says, "How old do I have to be to be a member of this society, and why should I be denied all kinds of things just because I have not reached the age?". I think there's got to be a point where you have to have a specified limit at a fixed rate. Probably true of the age, although I have more trouble there. But when it comes to translating all of the subtleties—the