

Mr. ROSENTHAL. How much would you say that the GSA spends a year on testing consumer-related products such as tires, antifreeze, pencils, pens, things of that type?

Mr. ABERSFELLER. We don't have a precise figure. I would suspect in the ball park of three-quarters of a million dollars.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. And if we could overcome the doubts as to the type or the method of making this information available, why couldn't we begin a pilot program on some half dozen or a dozen products and let the public have the performance information that you have?

Mr. ABERSFELLER. Well, again Mr. Chairman the information we have is not as finite as representing that this product or that product is better than the other, except in those instances where we have gone through testing for a qualified-products list.

Certainly there is no objection on our part to making that information available. It is available now. We have roughly a hundred of these QPL's that could be made available.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. GSA, for example, finds five antifreezes satisfactory for use in automobiles. What is wrong with making that information available?

Mr. ABERSFELLER. Nothing. It is now available to anyone who chooses to buy it. It is available under our regular specifications distribution program. In that particular case, in the case of antifreeze, there are four firms that have qualified under antifreeze, ethylene glycol inhibitive type 2.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. That information is in the public domain?

Mr. ABERSFELLER. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. If someone, for example, in the President's Committee on Consumer Interests, wanted to polish the presentation of that up and put it out in a small booklet form for consumers you would make it available?

Mr. ABERSFELLER. Absolutely.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. On what other such items do you think this could be accomplished?

Mr. ABERSFELLER. We have quite a range of items starting with antifreeze, batteries, sawblades, brushes, blasting caps, material clamps, and so forth.

Let me explain why we have qualified products lists, Mr. Chairman. These are for items for which the normal testing time prior to acceptance is too long for the Government to tolerate doing business with the private sector of the economy, neither can the private sector of the economy stand the length of time it would take to test the item to determine whether it is what we wanted or not.

We set up these lists and the only people who can get a contract on Government business are represented on those lists.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Your agency does have a wealth of material and information that could be of use to the consumer. We are in agreement there.

Mr. ABERSFELLER. We have certainly the qualified products list which would be of help, yes.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Do you know that you are the only agency in the Federal Government with knowledge of use to consumers that has no publication of any kind identified on behalf of the consumer interest?

Mr. ABERSFELLER. I didn't know that, but it may well be.