

(2) the development by the Government of consumer standards, that is, standards for consumer commodities and products, would have little real use, because it would require either some regulatory authority to see that people who claimed that they were making a product to the standards actually did, or the consumer would have to be a testing facility in himself, and he is not.

The average housewife cannot count the threads in a bedsheet, for example.

Experience has indicated that if the use of a hallmark or of a designation number is authorized without any one regulatory authority to determine whether or not products really comply with a standard, there is the possibility that the conscientious manufacturer would be hurt because he is going to be careful, while the man who might not be quite so conscientious could make a product inferior to the standards with no one responsible to determine whether the standards are met.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Let me ask you, is it your opinion that within the National Bureau of Standards and other Federal agencies there exists a reservoir of information useful to consumers which is as yet untapped and untranslated and generally unavailable to the public?

Mr. JENSEN. Yes, sir. There definitely is a wealth of information, but in its present form it is my feeling that it would not be of use to the consumer.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Now is there some efficient, yet inexpensive way, to translate that information into a form useful to the consumer?

Mr. JENSEN. I think there are a number of ways. One way that has occurred to me is that if there could be employed a small staff of engineers, technical writers, with appropriate clerical support, with the assistance of the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs, with consumer organizations, with the help of the State weights and measures officials, and food and drug officials, items could be selected, in some order of priority, probably starting with major items—refrigerators, roofing, ovens, furnaces, and so forth. Then, gathering together the knowledge that is now in the Government, either in the minds of the experts or in published form, reduce this knowledge to generic or nonproprietary information that would help the consumer who wants to make a more intelligent judgment in his selection.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Now it is very pleasant for me to hear you say that. When you say a small number of people, what do you mean?

Mr. JENSEN. I do not think it is possible or practical or realistic to have a big organization.

One of the real problems here is to get the information out to the consumer. I have the feeling that if one were to publish small pamphlets, nickel, dime, quarter pamphlets, make them available only through the Government Printing Office, they largely would stay on shelves. So some mechanism would need to be devised to get the publications out to the people who can use them.

I believe that two or three engineers, maybe a couple of technical writers, and appropriate support staff could do a lot of work in a year's time.

No research or development work would be involved. What would be done would be to identify the source, gather together information, translate it, and get it out.