

saved by deferring some purchases? How much can be saved by stocking up when prices are lowest? Many consumers also want help in developing family budgets. How much do persons in a particular income bracket generally spend for clothing? How much does it cost to own and operate a car? The Bureau receives thousands of letters each year wanting to know the answers to such questions. Many letters are referred to us by Members of Congress.

As you know, the Bureau does collect and analyze a great deal of information that is of value to consumers. We publish the Consumer Price Index, a statistical measure of changes in prices of goods and services bought by urban wage earners and clerical workers. It is published monthly for the country as a whole and separately for 23 large metropolitan areas. On a national basis the details extend to separate indexes published either monthly or quarterly for about 300 individual consumer items. We also publish average retail prices for nearly 100 food items for the United States and the 12 largest metropolitan areas.

Here I am distinguishing between the actual prices and index of prices, which I covered earlier.

I should like to make special mention of the Bureau's standard budget studies, estimates of what it costs in dollars and cents, to maintain various standards of living. Next month, the Bureau will begin publishing new indexes of intercity differences in living costs. The Bureau plans to publish cost estimates for a modest living standard, separately for 39 metropolitan areas. A U.S. urban average cost estimate will also be published and, in fact, will be the base of the intercity—or interarea—indexes of living costs.

I might interpolate, Mr. Chairman, that the total program for budget studies which has been financed by previous Congresses is somewhat larger than that. We are pricing out the cost of family budgets at three different levels of living.

The one in the middle is the one mentioned in my statement, a modest living standard.

Then we are working on and will be publishing somewhat later budgets at a minimum adequate, the very basic minimum adequacy which will, I think, show us the line between the minimum standard and the substandard living based on very careful studies of dietary requirements, minimum housing requirements, minimum clothing requirements for decency and self-respect, and objectively determined minimums for all the important categories of consumption.

Then up at the other end we will have a budget which I don't think we have given a title to yet, but it is for a somewhat more comfortable or more liberal standard for wage and salary earners.

At the present time we have projected this program to cover two types of families. One is a typical family of four: the husband, wife, one daughter, and one son; and the other is for an elderly couple.

There has been some discussion of budgets for other groups such as rural residents, single working girls, and so forth.

Up to now we have had the resources to project these three budgetary levels for the family of four and for the elderly couple.

We do try to relate the information collected to the needs of consumers. Bureau representatives meet with consumer groups to show them how BLS data can be used. Sometimes, we cooperate with spe-